



## **Beyond the Patten Report: The Governance of Security in Policing with the Community**

Topping, J. (2009, Oct 1). Beyond the Patten Report: The Governance of Security in Policing with the Community.

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### **Publication Status:**

Published (in print/issue): 01/10/2009

### **Document Version**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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**BEYOND THE PATTEN REPORT:  
THE GOVERNANCE OF SECURITY  
IN  
POLICING WITH THE  
COMMUNITY**

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Submitted in accordance with the regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Submitted August, 2009

I confirm that the word count of this thesis is less than 100,000 words excluding the title page, contents acknowledgements, summary or abstract, abbreviations, footnotes, diagrams, maps, illustrations, tables, appendices, and references or bibliography.

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## Acknowledgements

In many respects, this PhD has been an exercise in persuading people to give up their valuable time to talk about issues for which they would otherwise be paid. Without the co-operation, generosity and patience of all those who participated in and supported my research, this work would still be the aspiration that it was back in 2006.

First and foremost, my biggest thanks and gratitude must go to Dr. Liam Byrne, now retired from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Without his time, effort and significant input, this whole project would never have gotten off the ground. Furthermore, his faith in me to produce new and valuable research on a key tenet of the Patten reforms has been both refreshing and gratifying.

Another, large measure of thanks must also go to my supervisors. I cannot thank Professor Colin Knox and Dr. Rachel Monaghan enough for their faith in me to produce what must have originally seemed a hair-brained and insurmountable task. Their guidance, support and faith in my work has not only allowed me to produce this PhD, but develop from a student into an academic. It still doesn't feel like it though.

A more general thanks must also go to the Training Branch of the PSNI, through whom the majority of access to officers was granted. Indeed, the weeks and months spent in police stations and neighbourhood policing team offices was a unique experience. Only now do I appreciate the thankless task of being a police officer, regardless of politics or religion. Furthermore, the honesty and openness of all those officers who were interviewed was invaluable to the research – especially with regard to the key issue of community policing as part of the Patten reforms.

An important note must also be made regarding the support and help of all those in the PhD office. As any PhD student will attest, the support network of friends and colleagues is just as much part of the successful 'PhD recipe' as is the writing of the work. Joe, Sahla, Smita, Jonny, Asling, Claire and Cillian have all contributed to the production of this PhD in their own way. And for that, I thank them greatly.



Outside the remit of university life, I must also say a big, big thanks to Mum and Dad for all their support and a belief that I could get the thesis done. It has been many years since I took my first shaky steps at university, but both of you have been there through the ups and downs of the journey. Who would have believed all those years ago that I would end up as a lecturer in criminology? I might even grow up one day and get a real job!

And finally, but by no means least, I want to thank my wonderful girlfriend Christina. Through the final stretch of the PhD, she has helped to keep me both calm and (relatively) stress free as I have pulled the final threads of the work together. Without her support, care and coffees to keep me in order, I would not be where I am. The completion of the PhD is merely the production of a book. However, the sharing of that experience with you is much more valuable. Having completed a thesis on policing on Northern Ireland, it is at least one subject matter to which I can no longer reply 'it's all Greek to me'.

And finally, finally. There are many other people who helped me along with way with this research. From advise over coffees to scare tactics at the amount of work I should be doing. So a big cheers to all those at the University of Ulster and beyond who are too numerous to mention – although all the team in the School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy are definitely at the top of the list.

Thanks to all.

**Nil actum reputa si quid superest agendum**

## Summary

Policing in stable, democratic societies is predominantly concerned with the implementation and practice of the globally accepted philosophy of ‘community policing’. This concept, while itself contested within the modern structure of policing, is further problematized in transitional and post-conflict societies. From police legitimacy to opposing and alternative provision of security governance, the imposition of community policing encounters problems on many different levels. What the thesis examines is the Police Service of Northern Ireland’s (PSNI) reform towards a vision of community policing in line with Recommendation 44 of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (ICP); while taking into account the contributions of non-state security governance provision at the community level.

On one hand, the thesis provides a unique study of the delivery of community policing by the PSNI. And on the other, it provides the first empirical and systematic study of the contribution of non-state actors to the broader policing landscape. Using the sample areas of East and West Belfast, the research involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with PSNI officers and members of community-based organisations who contribute to the governance of security within those areas.

At the core of police reforms in the country, the implementation of community policing (or Policing with the Community under the rubric of the Independent Commission for Policing) has faltered in the face of institutional inertia within PSNI. This has been exacerbated by a failure of the police to adequately increase the co-production of security through improved engagement and utilisation of Northern Ireland’s diverse community infrastructures, which contribute broad *policing* rather than *police* issues. Through the concept of community governance policing, the thesis argues that there is a significant potential for interaction between PSNI and non-state ‘policing’ actors. And as part of the ICP’s vision of policing more broadly conceived, the thesis contends that through PSNI embracing the unique

‘otherness’ to security provision at the community-level, there is an opportunity to enhance the delivery of community policing which includes community-based contributions to policing and security governing as part of a broader ‘public good’.

## **Abbreviations**

CJINI -	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CSP –	Community Safety Partnership
DCU –	District Command Unit
DPP –	District Policing Partnership
HMIC –	Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary
IMC –	Independent Monitoring Commission
LCO –	Loyalist Community Organisation
LGD –	Local Government District
NHP –	Neighbourhood Policing
NICVA –	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NIO –	Northern Ireland Office
NIPB –	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NPJA –	National Police Improvement Agency
NPT –	Neighbourhood Policing Team
OOC –	Office of the Oversight Commissioner
PC –	Parliamentary Constituency
PwC –	Policing with the Community
PSNI –	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RCO –	Republican Community Organisation
RUC –	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SSI –	Semi-structured Interview

## **Note On Access to Contents**

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# **1.0 Introduction and Background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundations for the PhD thesis. Outlining the importance of the research, while setting out the contribution to knowledge and research questions, this chapter will guide the reader through the historical developments and complex issues underpinning policing in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, this chapter will provide an overview for the progression of policing since the Report of Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (ICP, 1999 – herein the ‘Patten Report’).

The chapter will firstly examine what is being researched and the contribution to knowledge. Secondly, it will provide a background to policing in Northern Ireland before introducing the reader to the areas of community policing and governance of security as central to the research. Finally, the research questions shall be outlined along with the layout of the thesis.

## 1.2 What Is Being Researched?

Before exploring the general issues of policing and police reform in Northern Ireland, or indeed the more specific avenues of the research questions, it is important to set the context to the research along with the intended contribution to knowledge.

As a starting point, policing in Northern Ireland has traditionally been conceived as a ‘mentality of rule’ (O’Malley *et al.*, 1997). In this regard, policing during the conflict tended to eschew policing by consent in favour of achieving compliance with the rule of law – with the police acting as conduits to enforce that rule throughout the Troubles. Arguably, policing largely became desensitised to the ‘social’ aspects of community interaction over the years. Thus, using Patten as a reference point, the PhD will examine the nexus between the PSNI (through Policing with the Community) as our state authorised, ‘top-down’ provider of policing; and the community (through the governance of security) as our ‘bottom-up’ conception of local, non-state security provision synonymous with Northern Ireland’s civil society.

One method of achieving this is through altering the conceptual reference point for ‘policing’, to that of ‘policing more broadly conceived’ (Kempa and Shearing, 2005). Traditionally, policing in Northern Ireland has been considered solely from police-centric perspectives, centred upon the politics of reform and change since the implementation of Patten (Shearing and Wood, 2003a). Indeed, the PhD thesis posits that it is time to ‘grasp the nettle’ and begin to take seriously the complex and varied networks of security governance which exist in Northern Ireland and consider their ‘place’ within the broader picture of policing. Not only has such ‘thinking’ been neglected by PSNI and academics alike over the years, but it is also an area which has fallen ‘by the wayside’ due to what Bayley has termed ‘Northern Ireland fatigue’ (Bayley, 2007).

It has also been argued that the post-Patten era has been concerned primarily with the superficial correction of police-community relations rather than ‘how best to intervene in the realm of non-state policing providers’ (Kempa and Shearing,

2005:8). Within our politically inclusive post-Patten era, it is therefore time to examine the phenomenon (and potential contribution) of Northern Ireland's community sector to crime and policing – both as a phenomenon in its own right; and in relation to PSNI's broad community policing paradigm as core to police reform and their policing style. In considering what may be termed 'community governance policing' (Topping, 2008b), the thesis is about exploring latent community capacities for policing outside that of the police – an area still lacking within the body of knowledge on policing in Northern Ireland. Although at the time of writing, it must be noted that such research would in the past have been extremely difficult due to the immediate post-Patten political circumstances (c.f. Moran, 2008). Indeed, it is only since Sinn Féin's historical acceptance of the policing institutions in January 2007 that broader considerations may be given to interaction between the PSNI and *all* sections of the community in Northern Ireland.

The thesis will further contribute to the knowledge of policing in Northern Ireland by looking at what structures and capacities exist within communities to govern their own security and how (if at all) they can promote their own common, community interests in conjunction with the PSNI/public interest (Shearing and Wood, 2003a). The study will also look *beyond* the Patten Report and determine whether it is necessary for PSNI to remain as the central, directing auspice for *all* aspects of policing in communities; and whether existing community structures could or should have the capacity to undertake or support the PSNI's delivery of community policing objectives under the banner of 'community governance policing' (Shearing and Wood, 2003a; Topping, 2008b).

### 1.3 Background to Policing in Northern Ireland

‘Northern Ireland has until relatively recently, existed in a kind of criminological netherworld...its *raison d’être* seemed to be to provide a plethora of ‘terrorism’ and counter-insurgency ‘experts’ with the raw material to feed their often fanciful imagination...a pre-Enlightenment void where the rules of the criminological game, as they were considered in Britain, did not apply’ (Ellison and Mulcahy, 2001:244-5)

Encapsulated within this statement is a broad criminological ‘assessment’ of Northern Ireland, the conflict and the concomitant political and policing issues which have lingered over nearly four decades. Thus, in the context of such unequivocal ‘otherness’, policing in Northern Ireland, as a function of troubled domestic affairs, has been no stranger to change and controversy alike (McGloin, 2003). Indeed, ‘modern’ policing in the Northern Ireland as founded in Sir Robert Peel’s militaristic Irish Peace Preservation Police in 1814, may be viewed as the forerunner to the establishment of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1922 (c.f. Ryder, 1997). However, it is at this historical juncture that change, contestation and conflict have become synonymous with contemporary policing as the most visible manifestation of law, order and politics in the country (Moran, 2008).

From the introduction of various discriminatory and draconian ‘emergency’ legislative measures since 1921, through to police control and direction under a partisan Unionist government, the RUC played a significant role in both precipitating *and* holding the ‘green line’ between the Unionist, Republican and British government triumvirate (Buckland, 1979; Hillyard, 1988, 1994; McEldowney and Gunter, 2003; Scorer and Hewitt, 1981). With over 3500 Troubles related deaths (of which approximately 300 were members of the RUC), including 48,029 injuries, 37,034 shooting incidents, 16,360 bomb explosions and 19,666 people charged with terrorism offences from 1969-2002, Northern Ireland has undoubtedly witnessed a bitter, internecine armed conflict (Hayes and McCallister, 2005). Though whatever the conflicting accounts of opposing political factions in regard to policing issues, the RUC consistently viewed themselves as the bulwark between anarchy and order (c.f. Ni Aolain, 2000; Ryder, 2004).

However, the purpose of this chapter is not to provide an assessment of the socio-political or historical accounts of police activity, important as they are in to the history of the conflict. Rather, it is the concept of change, from the quasi-military police *force* that embodied the RUC, to the community-oriented *service* of the PSNI. As already noted, policing in Northern Ireland is no stranger to change. Indeed, the antecedents of a ‘positive’ change and a ‘new beginning’ for policing in the country rests in the Labour Party’s intervention in Northern Ireland affairs during the late 1960s, when they were ‘stunned’ by the lack of police independence from the Ulster Unionist Party (O’Leary and McGarry, 1996).

Thus, from this point on there soon followed a raft of reports and inquiries into policing matters in the country. These included the Hunt Report (1969), appointed to examine the structure of the RUC (and their reserve, the ‘B-Specials’) regarding their exclusively Protestant makeup (O’Rawe, 2003); the Cameron Report (1969), which examined the on going civil disturbances associated with the beginning of the Troubles; the Scarman Report (1972), which studied the violent disturbances of 1969; the Widgery Report (1972) that examined the deaths at the civil rights march Derry, otherwise known as ‘Bloody Sunday’; and the Bennett Committee (1979) which undertook an investigation into the interrogation practices of the RUC. The findings in regard to the ‘local affairs’ of policing were also complemented by developments in Great Britain: The Scarman Report (1981) into the racially motivated violence in Brixton had resonance with the concept of police-community relations; and the Morgan Report (1991), which denoted the need for partnership in solving crime and community safety issues gained currency as an alternative style of policing to the centralised, militaristic approach (euphemistically known as the ‘Barbed Wire Act’) adopted by the RUC – a style of policing which involved the strict (and often arbitrary) enforcement of the law as a priority over more holistic, community-oriented policing styles (Weitzer, 1999).

More recently, significant changes to the policing landscape in Northern Ireland have included the official Republican and Loyalist ceasefires of 1994 which created

‘a radical shift in emphasis on policing practice and substantial alterations to police operations...[with] partnership as a central factor in developing policing in Northern Ireland’ (Moore and Smyth, 1996:8-9).

Furthermore, there was a fundamental shift within the RUC at that time. With the Fundamental Review (RUC, 1996) led by Ronnie Flannigan laying the foundations for many of the reforms in the Patten Report, there were fervent attempts within organisation to change to the metaphorical ‘fence at the top of the cliff’, rather than the ‘ambulance at the bottom’ (O’Hara, 1996). Indeed, the paramilitary ceasefires also changed the social and political dynamics under which the RUC operated within communities insofar as

‘in situations where the basic interaction between the police and people is one of confrontation, it may require a whole new political culture for community policing... to stand a chance’ (Ruteree and Pommerolle, 2003:604).

It must be noted the RUC’s attempted shift from its quasi-militaristic roots and towards a community-oriented service was not a total aberration of their function (Hamilton *et al.*, 1995). Not only did they enjoy considerable local support community policing in Unionist areas, but they also ventured to undertake ‘conventional’ foot patrols in hard line Republican areas, albeit flanked by up to 14 members of the British army, supported by armoured vehicles and air support. Furthermore, a number of publications grounded in a community-oriented theme were produced, including: ‘Working Together to Police Northern Ireland (1988); ‘People, Policing, Progress’ (1991); ‘Everyone’s Police’ (1996); ‘Listening to the Community, Working with the RUC’ (1997); and ‘Reflecting All Shades of Opinion’ (1998) (c.f. Mulcahy and Ellison, 2001). However, in spite of the *desirability* of this paradigmatic change in policing (at least for the RUC), it was (and still is) the *feasibility* of such change to a community-oriented approach which presents problems within Northern Ireland’s conflicted democracy (Reiner, 2000; Topping, 2008b).

However, the most significant watershed in regard to local policing (and politics) was the Good Friday Agreement, reached on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1998. As part of this politically negotiated agreement, it laid the foundations for an end to four

decades of incremental and politically nuanced ‘tinkering’ to policing and demarcated the beginning of substantial, inclusive and permanently acceptable change process (Topping, 2008a). Thus, the Good Friday Agreement effectively:

‘allowed Northern Irish society to commit to a process whereby an independent, international commission was charged to develop proposals for policing the future’ (O’Rawe, 2003:1018).

The mandate given to the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (created under the provisions of the Agreement), was therefore to create a ‘new beginning’. Thus, as part of changing the RUC from a quasi-militaristic force into an acceptable policing service which was to be: professional; effective and efficient; fair and impartial; free from partisan control; accountable, both under the law and to the community; and operate within a coherent and cooperative criminal justice system which conforms with human rights norms (ibid:1017).

The work of the Independent Commission in effecting such change was undoubtedly substantial. The report, entitled ‘A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland’ (1999) (herein, the ‘Patten Report’) was published by its Commissioners who considered the views of ten thousand people through public meetings, 450 written submissions received at those meetings, including another 2500 individual submissions on policing issues (Patten Report, 1999:11). The resulting 175 recommendations, as published in September of 1999, are today hailed as the most significant and complex blueprint for police reform in the world (Office of the Oversight Commissioner, 2006:1). Indeed, the changes to the RUC were ostensibly about ‘a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole’ (Patten, 1999:1). It has been further noted by McGarry (2004) that the Patten Commission made strident efforts to avoid ‘false economies’ in fulfilling its mandate. In part, this was achieved through maintaining an over sized service, both to deter the paramilitaries from returning to violence; maintain police capacity to manage large scale public order situations; facilitate faster changes to the gender and religious composition. Though significantly for the background to the PhD thesis, this ‘new beginning’ was about a novel and far reaching experiment (at least for

Northern Ireland) in community policing, or ‘Policing with the Community’ under the rubric of Patten. Thus, in the face of the change momentum, there was a new found consensus in Northern Ireland ‘that if policing can somehow be ‘got right’ many of the other pieces of the jigsaw will slot into place’ (O’Rawe and Moore, 2001:181).

However, the work of the Commission in achieving such change, while in itself impartial and independent, was not immune from the subtleties of the Northern Ireland political administration regarding ‘change’. As part of what was termed the ‘change dialectic’ (O’Rawe, 2003), the entire police reform process hinged on the fact that ‘implicitly, bargaining about police became meta-bargaining as to the nature of the conflict...’ (Campbell *et al.*, 2003:342). It may be observed that in the years preceding Patten (just after the 1994 ceasefires) policing had also become a centre-stage issue, with much local and international focus on the need for a ‘change’ to policing within the country (O’Rawe, 2003). But rather than embrace the attention with open arms, the attitudes of those in authority were summed up by the former Chief Constable Hugh Annesly, who stated that

‘I do not accept the change argument. I do not believe that there is anything inherently wrong with the RUC that needs to be changed. I do not accept the organisation is wrong and must be fixed’ (RTE Interview, 1995 ‘Policing in Northern Ireland, March 9<sup>th</sup>’).

The subsequent ‘survival instinct’ of an organisation which had borne the brunt of 30 years of conflict, with over 300 officers killed and thousands injured thus started long before Patten ever reached print (Walker, 2001). Indeed,

‘as soon as it was clear that a review of policing was under discussion...the RUC established a change management team both in order to influence the process politically and to prepare the ground for the modernisation of the force within’ (Hillyard and Tomlinson, 2000:415).

In the immediate aftermath of Patten’s publication, far from being hailed as the panacea for policing, and the final ‘piece the jigsaw’ in Northern Ireland, it was criticised from many sides and on many levels. In spite of the fact Patten had finally wrestled 30 years of state monopoly on policing from the state (Bayley and Shearing, 1996), its own Commissioners argued (that in the wake of the Secretary of State’s



capitulation to Unionists), the translation of the Report's 175 recommendations into legislation had been

‘undermined everywhere...the Patten Report had not been cherry-picked, it had been gutted...it will not serve the people of Northern Ireland. Nor will it serve the many, many dedicated persons with the RUC who have been looking for a new vision of policing that will move and inspire them to police in partnership with the community they serve’ (Shearing, 2000a:21).

Indeed, this scathing critique has been confirmed through many subsequent analyses (c.f. Hillyard and Tomlinson, 2000; McEvoy *et al.*, 2002; Mulcahy, 2006; Ryder, 2004).

For the Conservative thinking pro-Unionists at Whitehall, it was clear that ‘the new police would have to be loyal to the European Convention on Human Rights rather than the Crown’ (extract from *Daily Telegraph*, cited in Hillyard and Tomlinson, 2000:408). For home-grown politicians, Unionist sentiment was captured by the former UUP leader, David Trimble, summarising Patten as

‘a gratuitous insult and most shoddy piece of work seen in his entire life...[while] for most nationalists the RUC effectively lost whatever claims it had to legitimacy during the ‘troubles’. Its inability to suppress assertive nationalism also lost it credibility among unionists’ (Anderson, 2007:14).

On a more philosophical level, Brogden has questioned the ability of the whole change process to revise 200 years of military police tradition as inculcated into the RUC (Brogden, 2001). In this regard, he further noted Patten was ‘void of an account of...conflicting diversities. It is in effect a-historical – contains no explanation as to how such problems have arisen...’ (Brogden, 2002:176).

In the contemporary post-Patten era, it is important to define a number of further developments which have permeated the policing and political landscape. On a positive note (and probably most significantly), following the endorsement of the policing bodies by Sinn Féin’s governing council in January of 2007, they have for the first time in their history accepted the legitimacy of PSNI since its creation in November 2001 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 2007d). Not only has this resulted in Sinn Féin taking its seats on the Northern Ireland Policing Board for the first time, but the historic watershed engendered significant political progress, with a devolved

government having now been restored to Stormont since the 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2007. This will undoubtedly hasten (although at the time of writing delayed) devolution of policing and justice powers to local politicians for the first time in recent history. It has also resulted in the formal procedures, as stipulated in the Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act 2007, for the re-organisation of District Policing Partnerships to reflect more fully the composition of Nationalist and Republican communities, enhanced through the inclusion of Sinn Fein members. This is very significant, not only in symbolic political terms, but also in practical terms of holding the PSNI to account at the local level to all sections of the community (Topping, 2008b).

In this regard, it is apt to note the observation of Sir Maurice Hayes (one of the Patten Commissioners) following Patten's publication, stating that

‘the only way you can influence things is from the inside... Basically the Nationalist parties have to decide if they want ninety percent of something or one hundred percent of nothing’ (Cusack and Unsworth, 2000:7).

Now, after eight years in the policing wilderness, Sinn Fein, and by extension the majority of Republican/Nationalist communities are now part of a fully inclusive democracy, with the Northern Ireland Policing Board in position to take forward the policing agenda for both communities in Northern Ireland (NIPB and PSNI, 2008).

However, there are also a number of other developments, which have coincided such historic steps. Firstly, after beginning its term of office in May 2000, the Office of the Oversight Commissioner has finally finished its work in monitoring the implementation of Patten recommendations. Over a seven year period, the Oversight team adjudicated on Patten's 175 recommendations through 772 performance indicators over nineteen reports – with its final report noting the completion of nearly all the recommendations (Office of the Oversight Commissioner, 2007). With the tone of the nineteenth report undeniably positive, only a few concerns remain in regard to: the devolution of policing powers; the overlap of functions between the District Policing Partnership and Community Safety Partnership roles; and importantly for this thesis, the implementation of Policing with the Community (ibid; CJINI, 2006b).

On a further note of importance for the PhD research, the Oversight team made a significant note on the capabilities of the community sector in Northern Ireland. With approximately 4500-5000 community-based groups (NICVA, 2005; CJINI, 2006a), further described by Bayley as part of Northern Ireland's 'hyper organised' civil society (Bayley, 2007), the Oversight team stated:

'the Policing Board, the Police Service and the Northern Ireland Office need to be alert to the effects the well intentioned creation of community groups and their overlapping mandates can have on community engagement...With the 2009 Review of Public administration implementation looming, it will be timely to review the structural issues and create structures appropriate to optimising the all important community engagement efforts...' (Office of the Oversight Commissioner, 2007:16).

This is highly significant in terms of the research and specifically for the concept of 'security governance', which shall be discussed below.

Having briefly examined some of the contemporary developments of policing, both informing the background to, and context of the changes to the police in Northern Ireland, it is important to take a step back and ask what precisely is being researched in the PhD? To digress slightly, at a recent public lecture by Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa at Queen's University Belfast concerning policing and change in the country, they argued that Patten may be conceptualised in two 'streams'. The first stream, which has arguably reached its natural denouement, is the reform to the 'systems' of policing, or the changes in symbols, ethos, human rights and training, espoused in the end of the Office of the Oversight Commissioner's term of office. The second stream may be seen to concern the 'broader questions around the governance of security, or, 'policing' broadly conceived' (Kempa and Shearing, 2005:5). Thus, it is to this second stream and the underlying Patten Recommendation 44 on community policing and the concept of the 'governance of security' upon which the PhD thesis will focus upon.

Looking at the general concept of community policing, or Policing with the Community under the rubric of the PSNI, it is important to remember that in spite of the political progress in regards to policing issues, Northern Ireland is still far from a stable, 'normal' society conducive to community-oriented policing associated with

the English 'bobby on the beat'. Indeed, this was coined succinctly by Hillyard and Tomlinson (2000:404) who state:

'In the eagerness to describe developments on the periphery of policing, including greater citizen participation, what has been happening at the heart of the state either has been ignored or diverted into a conceptual argument...'

Thus, in providing a degree of realism to the social context in which PSNI work, it is important to highlight a more realistic picture of Northern Ireland from a criminological viewpoint.

An initial inquiry would suggest Northern Ireland, as a society emerging from conflict suffers from relatively low levels of crime. Unlike the often compared transitional democracy of South Africa, which suffers from ever rising and extreme levels of violence and murder, the people of Northern Ireland appear to have relatively little to fear (c.f. Altbeker, 2005; Baker, 2002; Shaw and Shearing, 1998). Such low crime levels have tended to be explained through a Durkheimian school of 'solidarity in conflict', in conjunction with the detailed sociological accounts of close-knit communities and 'grapevines', prevalent throughout various communities (Brewer, 2001). On one hand, this 'low crime' conception of Northern Ireland may be contested on the grounds of reduced reporting due to police legitimacy problems (Brogden, 2000). On the other hand, the aetiology of such low crime rates is further bolstered through accounts of paramilitary violence, 'punishment' beatings and 'kneecappings', synonymous with deterring crime and anti-community behaviour within (working class) Protestant and Catholic communities (Morrisey and Pease, 1982; Monaghan, 2004).

Exploring a more 'official' aetiology of crime, there is a wealth of Government and statutory body data evidencing Northern Ireland as our 'criminological netherworld'. Firstly, the chance of becoming a victim of crime in Northern Ireland is significantly less at 17.3%, versus 23.5% in England and Wales; with the same comparison indicating 1 crime is committed for every 13.9 residents in Northern Ireland, compared with 1 crime for every 9.7 of the population in England and Wales (NIPB, 2007b; HMIC, 2007). Indeed, with the overall crime rate in Northern Ireland having fallen consistently to a five year low in 2007 (PSNI, 2007);

having the lowest victimisation rates and highest reporting rates for crime in the European Union (Lyness *et al.*, 2004); and the public having 83% confidence in the PSNI (NIPB, 2007a), safer communities are an ‘official’ reality of contemporary Northern Ireland.

However, the official figures do not represent the whole picture of crime and policing in the country, and blindly accepting this ‘rose-tinted’ view would at best be naive. According to Brogden and Nijhar (2005), even since the 1994 Loyalist and Republican ceasefires: 170 people have been murdered by the paramilitaries; 11,000 people have suffered terrorist related incidents; 2600 people have received ‘punishment’ beatings; 5500 illegal firearms have been seized; 1100 explosive devices have been uncovered; and in 2003 alone 1200 people were forced from their homes due to security or sectarian reasons. Far from being isolated incidents to be considered aberrations of ‘peacetime’ Northern Ireland, it must be remembered that dissident Republicans are still planting viable explosive devices, threatening DPP members and involved in concerted efforts to kill a PSNI officer (*Belfast Telegraph*, 2007b; 2008a-c; *Irish News*, 2009b; 2009d). Indeed, following the murders of two British Army soldiers and the first ever PSNI constable by dissident Republicans, it is a continuing feature of the post-Troubles landscape that the terrorist threat remains at its highest for many years (*Belfast Telegraph*, 2009a; *The Guardian*, 2009).

Further weight is given to this critical analysis of the ‘normality’ of peacetime Northern Ireland in view of the fact Protestants and Catholics are still deeply divided in all walks of life – from education to public services, bus stops to shopping centres (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). As indicated by a survey undertaken at Queen’s University Belfast, religious division between the post-ceasefire generation still remains strong, notwithstanding the inter-community indifference on how to deal with the history of the Troubles and the concomitant social and policing issues (*Belfast Telegraph*, 2007a; 2007c).

Indeed, such religious differences are further reflected in the (significant) variations in crime rates between Protestants and Catholics wards of the Province. With predominantly Protestant council ward areas suffering from 144.7 crimes per 1000 compared to 243.6 crimes per 1000 population in predominantly Catholic

wards, it is a clear demonstration of the ‘abnormality’ to peace in the country (NIPB, 2007b). In spite of the Independent Monitoring Commission (set up by the British and Irish Governments in 2004 to monitor paramilitary activity) having declared Northern Ireland to have reached its most advance stage of ‘normalisation’ since 2004, crime and anti-social behaviour have filled the vacuum created through stagnating political progress devolved policing and justice powers (IMC, 2007; *Belfast Telegraph*, 2008e). Here, it may be observed that within traditionally ‘anti-police’ Republican area of West Belfast, such deleterious trends in behaviour have caused the dissident Real IRA to publicly issue death threats against local criminals and resume their own ‘policing’ operations (*Andersonstown News* 2007; *Irish News*, 2009a; 2009c).

Turning finally to the organisation of the PSNI, it is interesting to note in the context of the Policing with the Community under Patten and movements to a ‘neighbourhood policing’ model (NIPB and PSNI, 2007), a relatively militaristic police structure still remains to deliver this community-oriented vision. As identified by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, in comparison with ‘most similar forces’ in England and Wales, the PSNI’s retention of public order and counter-insurgency capabilities is stark. Within PSNI, only 35% of all the District Command Units (DCUs) in Northern Ireland claim to carry out operational policing under ‘normal’ conditions (HMIC, 2007). Secondly, there are six times as many officers dedicated to public order policing, with four times as many officers dedicated to intelligence duties than ‘most similar forces’. Thirdly, the police-to-population ratio in Northern Ireland, at 1:227.2 still remains one of the highest in the Western world. Thus, when combined with a total of 86,073 overtime hours undertaken by PSNI officers to cope with the extra public order demands (equivalent to an extra £7266 per officer per annum), it gives a clear indication of the priority attached to (and necessity to retain) public order and terrorist policing capabilities in Northern Ireland (HMIC, 2007). Indeed, the facts only serve to reinforce the paradox of attempting a ‘community policing’ approach within Northern Ireland’s conflicted democracy, especially where:

‘the threat of domestic terrorism is always present in Northern Ireland...because officers are now more visible in communities where historically they would not have patrolled on foot or on bicycle they are more vulnerable to attack...the threat level is currently assessed as high’ (Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde cited in Marchant, 2007:5).

### 1.3.1 Community Policing

‘And if there’s a key bit...and I think it is the “holy grail” of policing around the world – it is community policing. Of course this can mean lots of things to different people, but it is firmly founded on the principle which underpins policing in Britain and Ireland – this is, policing with the consent of the community policed’ (Maurice Hayes, quoted by Committee on the Administration of Justice, 1999:12).

The sentiment on community policing, as captured by one of the former Patten Commissioners, is a firm testament to the gravity attached to this style, or policing philosophy detailed in the Patten Report. Thus, in the context of what is being researched in the thesis, it is important to explore community policing in more detail along its ontological underpinnings.

Espoused in Recommendations 44-51 of the Patten Report (which denote key features of policing in conjunction with the community) and specifically recommendation 44, community policing (or Policing with the Community) is an inherently amorphous concept. Though in reference to the idea of ‘policing more broadly conceived’ (Kempa and Shearing, 2005), it essentially ‘embraces a broad view of the police function rather than a narrow focus on crime fighting or law enforcement...’ (Cordner, 2005:403). Indeed, the community policing concept is premised upon the police working in conjunction and interacting with, communities and local populations while generating consent and legitimacy as part of crime reduction initiatives.

The antecedents of this broad view can be traced back to the founder of ‘modern’ policing, Sir Robert Peel, and his idea that

‘the police at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and public are the police; the police are... only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to the duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interest of community welfare’ (Peel, 1829 cited in Kelling, 2005:107).

However, the concept of Policing with the Community in Northern Ireland is fraught with many challenges. With the inherent uncertainty of roles for both the public *and*



police in the post-conflict transitional space (Ryan, 2007), it makes the definition of such a globally accepted policing philosophy both complex and fascinating. This is especially so when set against the intricate social backdrop to Northern Ireland's dynamic, transitional character.

Community policing is a phrase rich in symbolic power (Cohen, 1985), whereby

‘community policing’s appeal relates more to its iconic status and homely name tag than to the clarity of concept or unambiguously demonstrable effects’ (Fielding and Innes, 2006:129).

But essentially, community policing is concerned with the proactive, solution based, community driven co-operation between the police and the community to prevent crime, solve problems and improve the quality of life for a given community or area (PSNI, 2002a). Thus, in a distinct movement away from the reactionary, positivist and minimalist conception of law enforcement relying on the strict enforcement of legal norms premised on the monopoly of coercion (Bittner, 1974; Mani, 2000), it is a movement towards a more persuasive, interactive and ‘soft’ style of policing (Innes, 2005).

When researching the concept of community policing, it must be understood that because it is concerned with policing more broadly conceived, by logical extension it has more to do with social and real-world influence in terms of its success or failure in any particular context (Fielding, 2002). Thus, when the definitional ambiguity of this concept is combined with the lack of amenability to systematic and comparable measurement beyond the pre-existing police-centric measures (Oliver and Bartgis, 1998; Jesilow and Parsons, 2000), it presents conceptual problems in creating any sort of standardised indicators by which it may be understood. Therefore, based on the premise that policing has the capacity to tell us something about the normative ordering of society (Eillson and Martin, 2000), an ‘open-approach’ relating to the causes and effects, influences and outcomes must be observed. This is especially pertinent when the community policing philosophy is ‘built on assumptions only partially supported by empirical evidence’ (Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994:3).

What cannot be divorced from any research on community policing and the ‘hugger-mugger’ of practices it represents, is the desired (and required) nexus between the police and the community, which has continually been reinvented since the 1970s (Brogden, 2002; Kempa and Shearing, 2005; Roberg *et al.*, 2005). With the promised allure of decentralised, expansive, problem-oriented, cooperative, democratic, community-anchored policing, it undoubtedly has global appeal (Loader, 2000). Indeed, the promise of reinvigorating this police-public nexus has enabled the concept to gain considerable currency in modern policing practice, highlighted by its import and export on a transnational basis. In regard to this global ‘appeal’, community policing has been used in a variety of international contexts: as a peace-keeping tool in Bosnia (Mobekk, 2002); for the protection of Roma minorities in Eastern Europe (International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, 2002); the transformation of the Serbian police from a military force to a community service (Ryan, 2007); and even to develop policing in Mongolia. Though as Brogden wryly notes, while two members of the former RUC were in Mongolia ‘selling’ community policing to the local police –

‘how does a brief visit by a few non-specialist RUC officers almost spontaneously transform the Soviet-inherited Mongolian police...[at the same time]...the US Justice Departments Community Policing Consortium was attempting...to sell community oriented policing to the apparently community oriented field of Northern Ireland...in Nairobi community oriented policing was sold by trainers from the UK’s National Police Training College who bizarrely claimed a major success in Belfast’ (Brogden, 2005:73).

However, the point of this description as to the use of community policing in the global context is to illuminate the paradox of its international appeal with the *modus operandi* at the local level. Indeed, community policing is only relevant or effective where it is based on local standards of conduct and acceptable levels of enforcement and practice (Jesilow and Parsons, 2000). Therefore, in terms of what is being researched, it is vital to remember that community policing is ‘not an independent variable, but must be located within a wider mesh of social and political change...’ (Clegg *et al.*, 2000 cited in Brogden, 2005:90).

So what does this mean when researching community policing as undertaken by the PSNI? At a simple level, the research will be examining the PSNI's 'Policing with the Community' philosophy and policy, which, according to their own guiding principles distils this ambiguous concept into five key themes, which are: accountability; empowerment; problem solving; partnership; and service delivery (PSNI, 2002a). While none of the categories are mutually exclusive, each one contains the seeds of a successful policing model in Northern Ireland, where equitable delivery of policing and community engagement should underpin all policing activities.

Steering clear of simple reliance on police-centric performance indicators upon which the police service so heavily rely, the research will adopt a 'triangular' approach. Here, a variety of policing, social, community and political views will be gathered to provide a more 'full', thematic account of how the PSNI deliver 'Policing with the Community' as an organisational goal in partnership with the community.

Finally, the research will also undertake a critical appraisal of the PSNI's community policing policy and practice. There are many factors, both political and social, that remain exogenous to policing in Northern Ireland, and which ultimately exert various pressures on police/community engagement at any given time. The research will therefore explore the 'state' of community policing within PSNI and from a 'top-down' perspective at the community level. Though what must be remembered in the context of researching the police in a society emerging from conflict, the perceived value of PSNI's normative shift to a community policing approach is ultimately 'a function of history, culture, and political tradition, as well as society's receptiveness to innovation' (Teitel, 2000:220). It must be noted that Patten's term 'Policing with the Community', along with community policing and neighbourhood policing (as the PSNI's practical interpretation of that term) are used interchangeably throughout the thesis to denote PSNI's broad organisational shift towards reducing the nexus between themselves and the community in Northern Ireland as part of delivering a local, tailored policing service.

### 1.3.2 Governance of Security

‘The first thing to understand is that the public peace...is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as the police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves...No number of police can enforce civilization where the normal, casual enforcement of it has broken down’ (Jacobs, 1962:41)

The conceptual logic contained within this assessment of security and order in 1960s urban America is undoubtedly one which attaches value to the informal associations which exist between people and groups in society (Gillchrist, 2004). Thus, bringing this concept into the contemporary academic realm, such ‘associational security’ (whether formal or informal) may be described as

‘institutional, organisational, communal and individual agents or nodes...that are interconnected in order to authorise and/or provide security to the benefit of internal or external stakeholders’ (Dupont, 2004:78).

And more simply, as part of security governance literature, it may be described as what is done intentionally both bodies and organisations other than the state police to promote secure places within which people live, work and play (Shearing, 2001c:99)

As argued by Garland (1996), with the historical rise of police monopoly in security, law and order throughout the last two centuries, the rise of state-centred policing has, in effect, ‘contributed to the weakening of community capacity by trivialising or ignoring the natural resources of social support that do exist’ (Hines and Bazemore, 2003 cited in Marks and Wood, forthcoming:14). Therefore, the capacity for communities to self-organise against crime and disorder in the face of this ‘police monopoly’ has, according to Garland, been reduced (1996). Though far from exerting this monopoly through a ‘police state’, it is also argued that the police capacity to fulfil their inflated role as sole arbiters on crime and security is itself built on crumbling foundations. In this regard, it is contended that the ‘competence’ and omnipresence of the police is now decidedly illusory (Dupont *et al.*, 2003).

But moving away of the broad social conceptions of security and order grounded in police development, we are also witnessing what has been termed the ‘refeudalisation’ of society (Johnston and Shearing, 2003). To briefly explain this

term, it is important to draw attention to Osborne and Gabeler's (1993) 'steering and rowing' analysis of governance. Based in the Hayekian principles of market forces, and in combination with the dramatic rise in private space (Stenning, 2000; Shearing, 2006a), security and order have become a commodity to be bought and sold by private auspices and providers (Shearing and Wood, 2003a). Thus, with the private and public purchase of security, from shopping malls to gated communities, the government has adopted an 'arms length' approach in both the provision and regulation of such activity. This has created what may be termed a dualist, feudal society comprised of those who do, or do not have the material resources to enter into what has been called 'denizenship', or the belonging to collective social movements where security is provided by agencies outside that of the state (Shearing and Wood, 2003b; Stenning, 2000; Blakely, 2007).

But the question must be asked, where does this leave the 'ordinary' public interaction with the police, and what relation has it to the context of Northern Ireland? Private security has been described as community policing obtained through the market place. Thus, in contrast to our market analogy, for 'non-denizens' where community-police interaction may not be fulfilling its potential, 'governance of security' is viewed as a lens through which to examine community attempts to reclaim at least some policing roles. Furthermore, it may be used to examine the public's 'attempt to emulate what private security does for the well to do', paid for in the coin of social capital, trust and collective organisation (Bayley, 1988:233).

However, looking to Northern Ireland as a society emerging from conflict, it possesses distinct features with regard to such security governance capacities. Far from the post-conflict landscape being characterised as a vulnerable, hapless society, dependent upon state policing in the face of rising crime, Northern Ireland, despite (or because) of its deep divisions, has one of the most advanced, civil societies anywhere in the world, much of which is oriented around policing and security issues (Bayley, 2007). Grounded in the security necessities of the conflict, many communities in Northern Ireland can be characterised by their 'moneyless economies [which] provide vital sources of assistance and support, especially within (security)

impoverished communities who cannot resort to the 'market' to meet their need' (Gilchrist, 2004:7). Thus, it is to Northern Ireland's complex social organisation and the 'moneyless economies' which have an interest in policing and crime issues that shall now be further defined in terms of what is being researched through the concept of the 'governance of security'.

At a general level, Northern Ireland presently has 4500-5000 community-based organisations, performing a wide variety of roles across different contexts, cultures, interfaces and issues (NICVA, 2005). At the more informal level, beneath these formal avenues of voluntary and community activity, also lie the networks of the well documented 'grapevines' in both Republican and Loyalist areas, which have sustained low crime rates and social order throughout the Troubles, albeit through often repressive methods (c.f. Knox, 2002). Outside of the moral and social arguments of paramilitary social control mechanisms, such organising can be viewed within the developing discourse on the 'pluralisation' of policing insofar as 'policing is now both authorised and delivered by diverse networks of commercial bodies, voluntary and community groups' (Jones and Newburn, 2006:1). Such a point may be further contextualised around the referent of police and state legitimacy throughout the conflict, whereby

'the weakening of it's [the state's] power and credibility induce people to build their own systems of defence and representation around identities, further delegitimising the state' (Castells, 2000:14).

It has been further argued in regard to the governance of security in Northern Ireland, that the forging of a potential link with such developed civil society was an opportunity missed during the reforms to policing generally (O'Rawe, 2003). This was further reinforced by one of Patten's own Commissioners who noted:

'there is still much timidity on the part of governments in allowing regular communities...similar powers for governance direction...the 'radical stream' of the Patten programme has not yet been given institutional expression' (Kempa and Shearing, 2005:14).

In terms of the thesis, the research will be examining such networks of formal and informal 'policing' through community-based organisations and groups, as a

‘bottom-up’ approach to policing, informing the ‘top-down’ approach assumed by the organising paradigm of community policing within the PSNI.

The value of undertaking such research is manifold. First, there is virtually no available literature which examines the rationales, expectations, aspirations and mentalities that have developed and upon which people act in specific cultural contexts regarding the governance of security. Secondly,

‘no single mentality, institution or technology of security governance is necessarily effective or desirable within a particular site, and as such, the opportunities or possibilities for instrumental or normative engagement are many and varied as well as contingent within and across different contexts’ (Wood, 2006:218).

Therefore, the research will provide at least an avenue for such instrumental or normative police/community engagement. Thirdly, rather than attempting to understand the PSNI’s ability to harness the activities of the various groups and networks from the perspective of their own public interest objectives, a security governance perspective helps to define their work within the specific local and social contexts of non-state policing activities (Braithwaite, 2000). Thus, such thinking will help to alter the perspective away from police-centric notions of policing insofar as ‘contestations, resistances and social antagonisms shape rule through systematic provision of alternatives’ (O’Malley *et al.*, cited O’Mahony *et al.*, 2000:9)

Finally, within Northern Ireland’s conflicted democracy, and in spite of the progress on policing, the lack of police intervention and interaction within the realm of security governance (and indeed research into the area) means the PSNI’s ‘Policing with the Community’ philosophy will ultimately fail to utilise ‘local’ community resources and put the community in community policing. It is for this reason that it is important to alter focus or perspective, whereby the governance of security should be seen not as a *problem* to overcome, but as an *opportunity* to be embraced, and as such shall underpin the research into the area (Shearing, 2006b).

## **1.4 Research Questions:**

In light of the thesis and the area being researched, the research will answer three key research questions in pursuit of looking beyond the Patten Report and considering the governance of security in Policing with the Community. The questions are as follows:

1. Has Policing with the Community, as the core to police reforms been realised within PSNI?
2. What is the role of community-based security governance and what capacities does it possess?
3. What is the potential for Policing with the Community and the governance of security to be incorporated into an overarching community governance policing framework?



## **1.5 Layout of the Thesis**

In regard to the layout of thesis, Chapter One has so far explored the history, context and background to policing in Northern Ireland – and more specifically, the concepts of Policing with the Community and the governance of security. It is intended that Chapter Two will provide a review of the vast literature on Policing with the Community (or community policing) and the governance of security.

Chapter Three will detail the methodological approach adopted to gather, interpret and disseminate the empirical research data. Chapters Four and Five will provide a detailed interpretation and analysis of the empirical data according to the key themes of Policing with the Community and the governance of security. Finally, Chapter Six will outline the conclusions from the research in terms of the emerging issues and policy directions. Furthermore, this Chapter will return to the original research questions, while identifying the contribution of the research to the current body of knowledge on the area.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter will be to review the literature on both community policing and the governance of security. Examining the theoretical underpinnings of these distinct academic subjects, the literature review will develop a theoretical framework within which the PhD research will be based, concluding with the key themes and issues.

## **2.2 Policing with the Community by the PSNI**

Having examined the context of community policing in Northern Ireland, it is important to now explore the vast and varied literature and theory underpinning this concept. Indeed, community policing has been described as a ‘hugger-mugger’ of practices (Brogden, 2005), and based on a myriad of evolving philosophical, strategic and operational paradigms that simultaneously describe an enhanced form of community-oriented policing, it is

‘aimed at achieving more effective and efficient crime control, reduced fear of crime, improved quality of life, improved police services and police legitimacy’ (Friedmann, 1992:4).

As part of an ephemeral, adaptable policing strategy to increase police-community nexus, it is further ‘popularised’ within policing circles due to the fact ‘the concept is itself vague enough to fit almost any interpretation’ (Ruteere and Pommerolle, 2003:604). However, community policing (or Policing with the Community under the rubric of Patten) has been neatly distilled into five distinct categories by PSNI. Under the auspices of the former Assistant Chief Constable Peter Sheridan, the PSNI produced two documents on ‘Policing with the Community’ in 2002 following the Patten Report: one based on policy, the other on the implementation (PSNI, 2002a; PSNI, 2002b). Thus, the five principles of community policing as adopted by PSNI are:

- Accountability;
- Empowerment;
- Partnership;
- Problem Solving;
- Service Delivery.

It is these five principles of community policing which form the basis for PSNI’s interpretation of Patten Recommendation 44 on Policing with the Community, and their ‘corporate need to identify and maintain these...as being central to all policing

issues and debates' (PSNI, 2002a:7). The following literature on community policing will be based around these five principles. Using each as a reference around which to organise the literature, it will help to distil the vast and varied research and theory on the community policing concept into a coherent theoretical framework, providing the foundations from which the rest of the research and methodology will develop.

## 2.3 Accountability

When exploring the concept of accountability through the Policing with the Community lens, it is important to set a brief context in regards to the type of accountability with which the literature is concerned. Most attention on the accountability of policing within Northern Ireland tends to rest upon the much vaunted *legal* accountability of the PSNI to the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI) and its adjudications on operational and disciplinary matters, including its investigatory powers under Part VII of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. Furthermore, great attention is also focused upon the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and its capacity to hold the PSNI to account on budgetary, training, operational and human rights issues under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (c.f. Dickson and O'Brien, 2003; Mulcahy, 2006; Topping, 2008a). However, the purpose of this section is not to re-examine these legalistic and procedural accountability mechanisms as part of the policing landscape in Northern Ireland. The intention here is to examine the more subtle, qualitative aspects of police work associated with community policing, an area which has commanded relatively little attention in the face of more substantive policing issues which dominate the accountability literature.

The literature on accountability is therefore divided into two distinct areas: Accountability and the Organisation; and Accountability at the Operational Level. This will not only provide a conceptual framework with which to explore the literature, but also provide a context for the intractable difficulties which plague police accountability as part of the community policing paradigm. Furthermore, when considering accountability as part of the 'Policing with the Community' rubric, it denotes accountability as factored into the *relational* qualities of police-community interaction, as opposed to financial, inter-organisational or intra-organisational accountability measures (Jones, 2008).

### **2.3.1 Accountability and the Organisation**

At a general level, community policing may be thought of as supplementing ‘the customary accountability of representative political institutions with grassroots consultation, evaluation and feedback’ (Bayley and Shearing, 1996:597). In contrast to the highly centralised, militaristic and legalistic accountability of the ‘traditional’ policing model associated with the RUC, community policing is premised upon more holistic approaches to local police accountability with regard to community needs, priorities and issues (Brogden, 2005). As part of this approach, accountability is about ‘decoupling’ policing from notions of law and the state, while giving communities ‘ownership’ of local policing matters (Kappeler and Kraska, 1998).

From an organisational perspective, the PSNI have undoubtedly undergone a sea change since the Patten report. With the Patten Reforms having transformed PSNI from a force defined by coercion to one defined by its consensual community approach, this has been accompanied by a distinct structural re-organisation and in relation to the concomitant policing structures created under Patten which provide accountability for policing activity (McGarry and O’Leary, 1999; Mulcahy, 2006). However, such an organisational realignment as envisaged by Patten raises a number of issues which shall now be explored in more detail.

Firstly, it has been argued that ‘community policing may close the gap between police and public, but it may open the gap between subordinate ranks and the police organisation’ (Bayley, 1988:235). This point has been reinforced by Worall and Marenin (1998), who indicate that the loosening of the rank-and-file system, as part of a decentralised community policing approach may further skew notions of accountability within the police organisation. This has been succinctly captured by Brogden (1999:180) who states that:

‘police organisations with no tradition of decentralised decision making encounter major problems. The decentralisation required by community policing, and the resultant increased autonomy of the rank-and-file, may have three effects...it may mean a loss in effective management controls as a consequence of decentralisation...it may result in a loss of wider accountability and control. Finally, loss of external and internal supervision may lead to a breakdown of professional standards of behaviour by police officers’.

It is certainly legitimate to counter this argument insofar as the increased autonomy may allow officers to foster new and innovative practices, maintaining their professional, accountable behaviour while conforming to organisational objectives. But in the context of delivering community policing as a 'new' style of policing for PSNI, accountability for officer activity may actually be lower than that associated with the more professional culture because of the necessity for innovation and discretion – as a style of policing not readily amenable to measurement, quantification or oversight (Stenning, 2000; Skogan, 2006b).

Beyond the basic organisational issues associated with community policing and accountability, a second and related point has been highlighted by Brown (1988), who denotes a 'bifurcated' system of accountability within police organisations. The first 'arm' is related to traditional police culture (as above - c.f. Chan, 2003); while the second is related to professionalism derived from the hierarchical structure. Looking to the latter, a feature of police professionalism and the culture of 'standards' is the notion of 'error avoidance', whereby 'such risk avoidance is likely to compromise...and slow organisational progress towards community policing' (Lilley and Hinduja, 2006b:20). Thus, the literature would indicate that officers are often unwilling to take 'risks' associated with the often necessary 'innovative elements' of community policing, returning to 'what they know' in terms of traditional law enforcement amenable to being measured *and* as a measurement of individual activity. Therefore, accountability for community policing activity is limited in terms of: a) the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of what officers are doing within a community policing context in the first place; and b) where officers oscillate between its practice and risk avoidance as part of their daily routines. This may be further compounded, especially when community policing may not be seen as 'real' police work in the first place (Skogan, 2006b; Garcia, 2005).

Moving away from the theory underpinning the organisational issues associated with accountability and community policing, it is vital to explore the theory behind the practicalities of accountability in this shift from coercive to

consensual policing styles. At a basic level, accountability as part of community policing is about 'needing to find alternative ways of measuring performance that recognises the outcomes that may be generated by 'soft' policing' (Innes, 2005). At a basic level, measures of 'success' for community policing practice vary greatly in their scope. From the ability of this community-oriented approach to maintain peace and order in transitional societies, through to reducing fear of crime, community policing creates an infinite pool of approaches which ultimately generates a need for an infinite pool of measures (Jesilow and Parsons, 2000; Fielding and Innes, 2006).

However, the literature would suggest that accountability within community policing contexts should not be limited to the production of positivistic measures for police action which may be aggregated, recorded and disseminated (Williamson *et al.*, 2006). Thus, it is important to look to other, less tangible sources of accountability for community policing and to the concepts of procedural and substantive justice and the attendant notions of police legitimacy as part of wider accountability considerations within the literature.

It must be noted that 'when people view an authority as legitimate, it is believed that they will voluntarily comply with the individual or institutional edicts' (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003:517). Thus, legitimacy has an unquestionable relevance to community policing's 'softer', consensual approach to managing and dealing with crime. But when legitimacy, and therefore accountability to local populations is strained (especially within Northern Ireland's conflicted democracy) it may be observed that

'a polarised public is problematic...It inhibits the police from fulfilling the regulatory role in society and produces polarisation and discontentment through the recognition that certain groups feel disproportionately mistreated by the police' (ibid.:515).

Thus, where perceptions of legitimacy are strained, either through perceived police (in) action or politically influenced resistances, accountability may be seen to pivot around the concepts of *procedural justice* and *distributive justice*. Examining the former, the literature posits that accountability is based upon community feelings of control in the decision making processes where the outcome was fair. Turning to the



latter contention, it is concerned with ‘aspects of the...experience not linked only to outcomes...aspects of their experience include neutrality, lack of bias, honesty, efforts to be fair...’ (Tyler, 1990:7). While both the procedural and distributive models of accountability may be viewed as important within the consensual community policing paradigm, the literature would indicate that such conceptions encounter difficulties within the divided nature of Northern Irish society. With community policing essentially about ‘tailoring’ local policing to suit local conditions and social contexts, what will be ‘fair’ to one community, may not be ‘fair’ to another (Brogden, 2002). Thus, with the potential for community policing to generate differential outcomes from identical practices, accountability as part of the procedural/distributive justice models may at best be subject to contestation – especially where one community ‘gets more’ than the other (ibid.).

It is therefore vital for police in considering this subtle dynamic regard that communities are (at least encouraged to be) involved at every stage so that the ‘processes’ which underscore police work are seen to be procedurally fair and distributed evenly. However, it has been observed by Friedmann (1994:263) that within broader police ‘thinking’ about community policing, ‘little space has been created for community participation and almost no resources are committed to the community role’. This problem may be further compounded by general community apathy to participation in policing activities (Grinc, 1994). Thus, enhancing community perceptions of police accountability can only be achieved when police/community participation is both meaningful and grounded in local context (Black, 2000). In this regard, it is only when communities are fully involved that the police can promote feelings of accountability for their responses to local community issues. And unless such locally-based and wide ranging participation (and therefore accountability) can be developed and maintained, accountability as part of the community policing paradigm will remain a ‘myth’, whereby it is

‘reduced to an exclusive co-operative deal between a limited sample of ‘law abiding’ citizens and the police...[whereby] community policing will continue to defend only very specific interests’ (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005:54).

### 2.3.2 Accountability at the Operational Level

Beyond the broad theoretical aspects of accountability at the organisational level, the literature will now be explored from a more practical orientation. Not only will this help evidence the operational realities underpinning police accountability, but also draw attention to the limitations of accountability within Northern Ireland's (still) divided society. Thus, the literature will be examined in terms of the importance of maintaining and developing viable accountability structures at the 'coal face' of community policing practice.

From a general perspective, it may be argued that policing has become increasingly concerned with promoting accountability through 'community aggregates', such as crime statistics and surveys (Shearing, 2000b). Thus, in view of the homogenising and aggregating connotations of 'community' as part of the community policing concept (Fielding, 2005), it is further argued that operational accountability is somewhat skewed insofar as police believe:

'that they [police] are better able to voice the feelings of the community than elected local councillors...either by operationalising the biases of the community forums...or by inter-personal gleanings from the 'respectable' public...' (Brogden, 2006:15).

With accountability for policing essentially about using community policing to manage generic public expectations and demands about crime and (in)security, it is useful to explore the literature on the specifics of the police 'being accountable' through police performance indicators – argued to be self-fulfilling answers to politically manufactured 'problems' and priorities (Beckett, 1997). Essentially, community policing is about the movement away from legally based constraints and standards of behaviour (a minimalist conception), towards being responsive to local community norms through alignment of local enforcement and acceptable standards of behaviour (a maximalist conception) (Wycoff, 1988; Mani, 2000). However, within the present climate of economy, effectiveness and efficiency (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2001), there has been a failure to adopt any 'surrogate measures' of the subtle, qualitative aspects of community policing work (Fielding and Innes, 2006). Here, accountability to the community may be viewed as limited on two fronts. Firstly,

when the police are faced with the dilemma of what is formally *expected* (and measurable) versus what is *possible* within a given community, it is contended police will regress to legal and policy driven definitions of law and order (Manning, 1977). Secondly, where problems are identified under the auspices of police performance management regimes, they:

‘are frequently identified as police problems to which there are police solutions. Any change is attributed to police causes ignoring changes in the wider social system’ (Fielding and Innes, 2006:136-7).

When considering this argument with the contemporary policing landscape, the dangers of ‘proper’ accountability at the community level become stark. Indeed, it is strongly argued that such ‘target culture’ has eschewed the principles of ‘common sense policing’, whereby police officers become little more than agents of the Whitehall agenda (Haynes, 2007a; 2007b; Hood, 1991; Loveday, 1999; 2000; 2006; Savage and Atkinson, 2001; Talbot, 2000).

Looking more specifically at accountability for policing in Northern Ireland, the Patten Report (through the vehicle of the DPPs) envisaged a way of making the police accountable to local catchments of civil society throughout the Province. Established under section 14(1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the DPPs as ‘excellent community sounding boards’ (Chairman of the Police Federation For Northern Ireland, cited in Mulcahy, 2006:174) have a statutory monitoring function under section 16 of the 2000 Act to:

- Provide views to the District Commander on any issues concerning policing in the area;
- Monitor the performance of the police in carrying out the policing plan;
- Make arrangements for getting the views of the public on matters concerning policing of the district;
- Obtain co-operation between the public and the police in preventing crime;
- Act as a general forum for discussion and consultation on matters affecting the policing of the district.

However, as is evident from the literature, the DPPs are not quite the ‘radical’ model for holding the PSNI to account that Patten may have hoped for (Topping, 2008a; 2008b).

To provide a brief, contextual history of police accountability structures, derived from the logic of the Scarman Report (1981), the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 created a statutory responsibility for obtaining views from the public on policing issues. However, due to the nature of the conflict and partisan nature of policing during the Troubles, the statutory Community Police Liaison Committees (CPLCs) in the main reflected the Protestant majority who supported the RUC (Walker, 1990; Weitzer, 1992). In this regard, the CPLCs were described as ‘rather cosy ritualistic affairs that achieve little practically and have no discernable impact on what the police do...’ (Morgan, 1989 cited in Weitzer, 1992:235).

Though far from learning the lessons of the past, the literature would indicate that the DPP’s role in holding the PSNI to some form of account has been somewhat hampered. Through the constraints of procedural formality, national security exemptions and public apathy, the DPPs have been described as ‘talking shops staged-managed to avoid controversy’ (DPP member quoted in CAJ, 2005:16; Mulcahy, 2006). Furthermore, in providing local accountability for local policing issues, they have further been described as a

‘shallow, sad reflection of what Patten had envisaged...[and] there’s no bite to them at all, and that suits the police because they don’t want that critical engagement’ (Topping, 2008b:789).

Though while it may be observed the DPPs are not the perfect conduit for holding the police to account (even outside Patten’s vision), the literature would suggest that accountability is more complex than merely holding regular meetings with the police in a given locale (Renauer, 2007; HMICS, 2004).

As part of the community policing paradigm, while the police must be accountable to the community at the local level, it is also important that the community are ‘educated’ as to their role in community policing, both in terms of what they should expect and what is realistically ‘achievable’ through the process of community policing (Myhill, 2006). But within Northern Ireland’s divided society where attitudes and opinions on police legitimacy are often polarised (O’Rawe, 2003), community perceptions of accountability for policing may be conceptualised

as lying on a continuum - with an 'authoritarian mindset' at one end and a 'fragmented mindset' at the other (Loader, 2006). In reference to the former, it serves as a framework within which the practice of more pervasive policing styles can be imagined. Thus, it denotes that accountability is premised upon an endless dependence upon, and expectance of the police to 'ratchet-up' responses and security in the pursuit of endless community expectations, which, from an objective viewpoint is practically unsustainable.

Examining the notion of the 'fragmented mentality', the concept highlights the fact that those who live (and have lived) with a lack of police provision (or live in relative insecurity) 'tend increasingly to search for alternative security solutions...by organising local forms of autonomous social ordering...' (Loader, 2006:216). Therefore, accountability for policing is merely about having the police response as a last line of resort.

However, the literature would indicate that accountability cannot be sustained or be meaningful where community expectations remain at either end of this continuum. It is therefore important that for the accountability strand of community policing to be successful, community education needs to play a central role in PSNI's shift to a community policing paradigm and its conceptual place in the middle of our 'continuum'. Thus, communities must be 'trained' to simultaneously recognise the limitations of community policing to tackle *all* crime issues all of the time. In this regard, the literature makes it clear that accountability is not just about the police's role in community policing, but rather it requires a significant element of community participation and co-operation with the police as well.

In overview of the literature on accountability within the community policing paradigm, there are many complex and complicating issues which interplay to suggest that accountability is, at best, a difficult task. Indeed, balancing imperatives of police objectives with the demands of local communities along with effectively involving all sections of a community is a delicate balancing act, especially within Northern Ireland's conflicted democracy (OOC, 2007). Thus, in tying together the threads of accountability from the literature regarding mechanisms, processes and

priorities as part of the social reality in which policing operates, it must be remembered that

‘in a democracy, policing, in order to be effective must be based on consent across the community...[where the] community recognises the legitimacy of the policing task, confers authority on police personnel carrying out their role in police and actively support them. Consent is not unconditional, but depends on proper accountability’ (Patten, 1999:22).

## **2.4 Empowerment**

When exploring the literature on community policing through the lens of empowerment, a useful starting point may be observed through one of its basic tenets as part of a community policing approach. Namely, that an explicit expectation of community policing is to activate and stimulate community involvement in crime issues, both formally and informally (Friedmann, 1992). Though beyond this simplistic overview of empowerment, and as a referent around which both the police and the public may be organised, there are several theoretical issues to be addressed within the literature. Indeed, with the empowerment 'process' requiring a redistribution of power (and therefore changes to police culture and procedures), as well as adaptations and collective organising on behalf of the community, it is also a 'two way' process (Gilchrist, 2004). The concept of empowerment shall therefore be examined from two differing perspectives: that of the police; and that of the community.

### **2.4.1 Police Perspectives on Empowering the Community**

Examining empowerment in specific relation the PSNI's community policing policy, it is stated clearly that

‘It is important to create a sense of joint ownership for addressing crime and community safety amongst members of the community and the police...’  
(PSNI, 2002a:11-12)

Contained within this succinct policy statement are, however, a number of caveats, which raise a variety of theoretical issues relating to empowerment, which shall now be explored in more detail.

Turning firstly to the notion of ‘joint ownership’, ‘the theory of community empowerment is concerned with the sharing of power with residents...in decision-making processes and management activities’ (Welsh and Hoshi, 2002:167). However, the axiom contained within the PSNI's logic – that increasing the utilisation of the community is an unquestionable good, remains far from certain. Firstly, empowering ‘more community’ does not necessarily equate to ‘less crime’ (Crawford, 2007). Here, the successful empowerment of communities through community policing practice is dependent upon a range of cultural, social and political factors which are often exogenous to the police function (Moon, 2006). Thus, with an abundance of such factors in Northern Ireland (including criminal/‘anti-state capital’), they serve not only as a barrier to the delivery of community policing itself, but also to empowerment based in the logic of ‘fighting crime’ in co-operation with the state police (Raab and Milward, 2003; Crawford, 2007).

Secondly, it is argued that empowerment (from a police perspective) can only ever operate as a ‘zero-sum’ game insofar as

‘what is awarded to the individual in the form of autonomy is taken from the state in its competence; what is available to the state in its capacities for social regulation is taken from the individual in the form of private autonomy’ (Black, 2000:610).

In this regard, empowerment may be viewed as an attempt to reduce the perceived governance deficits in security provision by the public police (Shearing and Wood,



2003b); and on the other hand, it is about an attempt by the police to harness the activities of the community in furtherance of their own public interest objectives (Shearing and Wood, 2003a). Though however empowerment through joint ownership is conceived, the literature would suggest that the police will always retain the power to control who they choose to empower within the community policing paradigm, not on the basis of capabilities *per se*, but on their capacity to conform with police objectives (Buerger, 1994; Stenson, 2005).

Turning to the second tenet of the PSNI's empowerment philosophy and 'community awareness', it is important for the police, before they attempt to initiate any processes of empowerment, to be aware of the communities in which they operate. Beyond the obvious fact that there may be no viable community to empower within certain areas (Webb and Katz, 1997), the police must be able to recognise what 'type' of community may exist within a given area. Based on the conception of 'collective efficacy', this is defined as 'cohesion amongst residents combined with shared expectations for the social control of public space' (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999:603). In this regard, Nolan *et al.* (2004) have developed four neighbourhood typologies (based in the conception of collective efficacy) which have strong implications for the empowerment thesis within community policing theory. These neighbourhoods are defined as:

- **Dependence Neighbourhoods** – those which are dependent upon police, whereby the police are mandated / obliged to protect them;
- **Conflict / Dissatisfied Neighbourhoods** – where police are unable to enforce social norms, while residents continue to see police as the primary agency, thus generating dissatisfaction with the police;
- **Resolution Neighbourhoods** – where the police and the community recognise mutual responsibilities, working together to solve problems and build relationships;
- **Interdependence (Collective Efficacy) Neighbourhoods** – where collective efficacy of the neighbourhood is realised through relationships and networks. The police only intervene in cases beyond the capability of the residents / community.

(annotated from Nolan *et al.*, 2004)

Where the police can therefore recognise, or at least have the capacity to realise what 'stage' of 'collective efficacy' a given neighbourhood or community may be at, the benefits for directing community policing operations and indeed creating objectives to maximise empowerment are evident. Jackson and Boyd (2005) have argued that where a locale reaches the 'interdependence' stage, it can benefit the police because such communities may act as a buffer to natural fluctuations in crime levels. However, it has been recognised that

'the problem...is that the police are trained to *see* (and therefore, respond to and deal with) only crime and disorder...Police are not necessarily trained to *see* or assess neighbourhood-level properties like collective efficacy. Therefore, many community policing strategies do not formally or systematically take into account...the social processes that affect its development' (Nolan *et al.*, 2004:101).

Thus, the lesson from the literature on empowering communities is clear. That empowerment requires the police to have an awareness of the processes which both support or inhibit a given locale from moving between these typologies (Roh and Oliver, 2005); to implement policing strategies appropriate to each 'stage' of collective efficacy; and to help strengthen broader community processes of community cohesion and organisation outside the strict remit of the police 'mission' (Kerely and Benson, 2000:52). Indeed, with community cohesion as a central feature of modern community policing strategies (Joyce, 2006; Casey, 2008), community empowerment should be conceived in terms of such factors underpinning police-community interaction (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006).

Finally, it must be noted within the community policing literature the police have had the primary role in constructing public relationships and in identifying the forms of knowledge with the capacity to address crime issues (Wood and Marks, 2006). Thus, while the police role has been projected as one of *strengthening* the capacity of the community through empowerment, in practical terms empowerment will always be premised upon procedurally 'thin' compromise and bargaining, rather than a consensual, deliberative, empowering process (Black, 2000; He *et al.*, 2002; Kappeler and Kraska, 1998).

## 2.4.2 Community Perspectives on Empowering the Community

Derived from the PSNI's 'Policing with the Community' policy, the mandate for the community role in empowerment is clear insofar as 'the community should...be empowered in their areas and play a part in the solution together with the police and other agencies' (PSNI, 2002a:12). Indeed, where the police command at least some degree of support and legitimacy, even the semantics of the community policing concept may act as a catalyst for community empowerment due to the fact that:

'many people are in favour of the kinds of policing values that community policing embodies and because...community policing ideas have been influential in creating a publicly acceptable framework and language for talking about policing' (Weatheritt, 1988:154).

Where community policing does manage to empower communities (at least to some degree), increasing community capacity to arrest insecurity and fear of crime, it can have positive implications for social, economic and even political developments within a given locale (Groenewald and Peake, 2004). However, at a more cursory level, it has been argued that without an adequate understanding of the processes affecting neighbourhood and community empowerment, 'it becomes easy to suggest that residents do not truly care...or that they simply do not trust the police' (Wells *et al.*, 2006:524). Therefore, the remainder of the section shall concentrate upon the literature which highlights the community perspective on empowerment and the implications for community policing practice.

From an objective viewpoint, it is recognised in the literature that:

'people will only participate if they believe their community is in trouble, their financial investment is at stake and there is a dynamic community leader willing to take the lead' (Vito *et al.*, 2005:499).

At least in the context of Northern Ireland's highly developed civil society (Acheson *et al.*, 2004; Bayley, 2007) there may be 'willing leaders' to lead communities on crime and policing issues, albeit arguing for the specific interests of local minority interests (Freidmann, 1992; McCall and Williamson, 2001). However, a significant limitation underpinning the ability of the community to be empowered in line with

police-centric community policing objectives is the extent to which the community *recognises* the need to participate in its own organisation against (potential) crime and disorder (Lynas, 1996).

A ‘template’ of a community ‘ready made’ for empowerment and participation in local crime and policing issues may consist of four main features:

- Having a high number of facilities, such as community groups, organisations, clubs and associations, and therefore meeting opportunities to articulate problems and concerns;
- An awareness of, and interest in building community resources and capacities, thus generating personal interest of the local citizenry;
- A community characterised by high levels of neighbourhood contact and interaction, thus generating higher community dependence and values;
- And as part of dependence upon each other, people will therefore invest more in each other in terms of time, resources and commitment.

(annotated from Volker *et al.*, 2007)

But within what Garland (2001) has termed ‘late modernity’, along with its attendant issues of rising crime and insecurity and the development of a self-interested and self-absorbed ‘Y-generation’ (Booth, 2007), the question of *why* should community members be willing to involve themselves in community policing, rather than *why not*, has been posed (Grinc, 1994). Interestingly, the low level, ‘quality of life’ crime issues which community policing aims to reduce through empowerment may not even be a problem for a particular community to begin with. It has been evidenced by Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) that our ‘template’ (above) for empowerment is not actually diminished by crime and disorder. Instead, it is increased structural disadvantage and reduced collective efficacy which is more important for community empowerment *and* which generates varied levels of tolerance to low level quality of life issues (Foster, 1995).

From this perspective, the ability of communities to empower themselves, and be empowered within the objectives of community policing practice can be view on a sliding scale as follows:

- **Strong Neighbourhoods** – low crime and high collective efficacy and therefore relative independence;
- **Vulnerable Neighbourhoods** – low crime and low collective efficacy, who are dependent on police, but not dissatisfied due to low crime;
- **Anomic Neighbourhoods** – high crime and low collective efficacy, whereby they are dependent upon the police, but dissatisfied due high crime;
- **Responsive Neighbourhoods** – which have high crime, but which are working on collective efficacy to resolve it.

(Nolan *et al.*, 2004:110)

What should be noted at this point is the recurring theme in the empowerment literature: that community empowerment will therefore work best (or has the potential to work best) where it is needed least, especially in contrast with poor, marginal and socially disorganised communities (Newham *et al.*, 2006). In this context, the end product or *goal* of empowering communities within the community policing paradigm may not be appropriate. Rather, it may be a more appropriate to ‘begin’ empowering communities in the more ‘anomic’ areas – *not* through the principles of community policing, but through law enforcement, or the ‘broken windows’ policing advocated by Wilson and Kelling (1982). This may help to provide the foundations upon which community policing may develop rather than the concept being simply ‘implanted’.

The literature has so far raised a number of theoretical and practical issues with regard to empowering communities. But as an apparent antidote to the inequalities in security generated by modern society and to rejuvenate community action (Garland, 1996; Rose, 1996), empowerment may not be the ‘silver bullet’ for community policing, even within communities successfully ‘utilised’ by the police. Indeed, the literature indicates that excessive expectations have now been placed upon the community as part of the neo-liberal drive to ‘hollow out’ the state and to increase its ‘steering and rowing’ capacities in regard to policing (O’Malley and Palmer, 1996; Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). It has therefore raised the question as to how much ‘weight’ for policing, communities can bear when laden with expectations

created by empowerment insofar as the 'community exists as a false floor, ready to collapse when laden with excessive...expectations' (Herbert, 2005:853).

Finally, even for those communities who possess the necessary social traits for effective empowerment, the dilemma of 'community capability' versus 'police compatibility' may still exist. Where there is a distinct capability to be empowered towards goals of crime prevention and policing, the literature identifies what may be termed a 'community Catch-22'. Thus, when communities become empowered beyond an acceptable, manageable threshold for the police: 'as soon as they begin to wield real power the pressure to subject them to rules becomes irresistible' (Nelken, 1985:257). It may be observed that such restrictions pre-judge the complex conditions which sustain empowerment in favour of the police-centric management objectives (Johnston and Shearing, 2003), ultimately reducing the capacity of empowerment as part of the community policing paradigm to enhance the nexus between state and non-state actors (Roche, 2002). However, it is argued that where the police blindly premise the empowerment of a community solely on the issues of crime, ignoring the contributory issues as identified in the literature, it is a 'doomed' strategy of empowerment that 'will not bring people together, but instead will create a community held together by mutual suspicion, and constantly deferring to authorities' (Waddington, 2007:15).

## 2.5 Problem Solving

The essence of problem solving (or problem-oriented policing) as part of the community policing philosophy may be viewed as

‘a decentralised, flexible team work system that would allow officers to develop the local knowledge and interpersonal skills to deal creatively with...matters’ (Goldstein, 1980 cited in McLaughlin, 2007:70).

Indeed, with problem-oriented policing recognised internationally as playing a key part of the community policing process (Brogden, 2004), it is unsurprising that this specific form of policing, designed to proactively involve citizens and other relevant agencies in reducing crime has been adopted within the PSNI’s Policing with the Community model (Kratcoski and Dukes, 1995; Herrington and Millie, 2006).

As outlined in recommendation 50 of the Patten Report (1999), problem solving

‘involves a structural approach to the identification and resolution of policing problems, making use of community consultation, partnerships and analysis of information. It actively addresses the underlying causes of crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour thus reducing the demand on police resources...’ (PSNI, 2002b:10).

However, beyond this simplistic vision of problem-solving are a number of issues. Broken down into two categories, the literature on problem solving will be examined from both *traditional* and *modern* perspectives to reflect not only the basic tenets of this concept, but also the normative issues on problem solving within more contemporary policing practice.

### **2.5.1 Traditional Perspectives on Problem Solving**

At a basic level, problem solving may be viewed as a process through which to transform the often abstract concepts of community policing into everyday activities and tasks, while providing evidence as to progress in dealing with crime issues in a locale (Skogan, 2006b). In what may be considered a progression in the Peelian vision of community policing which conceives the police as the public and the public as the police (Kelling, 2005), problem solving is about police developing a set of practices and activities, which, in partnership with other groups, agencies and individuals, target specific issues of community importance (Weatheritt, 1988).

The day-to-day practices of problem solving can vary enormously, from police officers gleaning information on a piecemeal basis from the public through to the strategic and operational planning of the SARA (scanning, analysis, response and assessment) model, as adopted by PSNI. Indeed, this four-point checklist is a comprehensive and systematic way to analyse and respond to information provided from the community and other partners in regard to crime issues. Thus, problem solving has been described as ‘something that lies between the fuzzy and rather nebulous concept of ‘social control’ and the narrower definition of police work’ (Crawford, 2003:137-8). However, adopting a more detailed examination of the literature, it will be possible to address some of the underlying issues with regard to problem solving as a vital tenet of community policing practice.

For problem solving to be (at least partially) successful, it should involve ‘the police working with the grain of the community’s normative standards, with a sensitivity to local conditions rather than universal legal...principles’ (Stenson, 1993:384). Through adopting this approach, the task of problem solving for the police should in theory be simple, especially where it aids in the facilitation and co-ordination of networks among citizens and organisations in the process of dealing with criminogenic issues in a locale (Ren *et al.*, 2006). However, it is now important to flesh out this basic conception for co-operation for problem solving in more detail, along with some of the complex and underlying issues identified in the literature.



On the one hand, with police's ultimate claim to problem solving expertise along with their monopoly on the use of force, they have a natural tendency to act as central and directing bodies in problem solving processes (O'Shea, 2000; Bittner, 1974). While this may not necessarily be 'bad' *per se*, it is argued that such police centrism 'conflates all local problems under master status of crime' (Brogden, 2006:15). Though on the other hand, with Crawford (1995:119) arguing that local community problems have now become 'marginalised insofar as they are defined in terms of their criminogenic qualities', it is contended that the shift towards this 'style' of problem solving ultimately acts as a gateway for the government to expand their powers into many spheres of social life (Kappeler and Kraska, 1998). Thus, as argued more generally, policing has begun to stray out of the 'legal' and into the 'social' – a shift which Brogden (2006) contends, is at the expense of community, voluntary and professional expertise as the ontological sources of knowledge within locales.

The effect of such police-centrism in problem solving is the reduction of complex social phenomenon into discrete, police defined causes and solutions (McCann, 1996). Such an approach (where not carefully managed) therefore creates difficulties for the more holistic methods required as part of the community policing philosophy of which problem solving plays a key role (Mani, 2000). In a regression to a more targeted law enforcement style of policing, it is argued that problem solving can therefore reinvigorate the 'militaristic' model of hierarchical target chasing policing based on objective (and measurable) reasoning – antithetical to the community policing philosophy (Willis *et al.*, 2007). Thus, in contrast to the 'mission' of community policing which seeks to undertake diverse and non-standard police work (*ibid.*), problem solving then becomes an exercise in objective risk management, designed to create new classifications and categories which can be identified, isolated and projected as part of a management regime (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). However, it is appropriate at this point to turn to the more contemporary perspectives on problem solving literature to illustrate the various issues associated with the shift towards the contemporary, risk based problem solving activities of the police.

## 2.5.2 Modern Imperatives of Problem Solving

From a basic perspective, it is argued that modern police approaches to problem solving tend to be

‘inherently undemocratic because the police define the parameters of debate for other agencies and the community is conceptualised as just another resource to be used in the officially defined fight against crime’ (McLaughlin, 2007:83).

Furthermore, it is contended that the use of ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ encoding as part of police problem solving has become detached from their ‘natural’ meaning in favour of that which can be mapped, audited and defined within *police* rather than *community* terms (Kappeler and Kraska, 1998).

Turning firstly to the notion of problem solving as being ‘undemocratic’ within community policing practice, it is important to note a shift from ‘crime intelligence’ to an all-encompassing ‘criminal intelligence’ perspective (ibid.). Using Brodeur’s (1983) conception of ‘high’ and ‘low’ policing, it provides a useful intellectual tool with which to analyse this shift. Within the context of ‘crime intelligence’, ‘low policing’ is the appropriate referent for problem solving practice insofar as it denotes the use of symbolic force on conspicuous signs of crime and disorder along with the gathering of local knowledge on particular issues (Brodeur, 1983). In contrast, ‘criminal intelligence’, as the notion of ‘high policing’ can be broken into three concepts:

- High policing is first of all about absorbent policing. This feature has two traits: (1) it aims to control by strong intelligence; (2) the intelligence gathering is all encompassing: it extends to any domain that may further the implementation of state policies;
- High policing is not strictly bound to enforce law and regulations as they are made by an independent legislator;
- Protecting a community from criminals is not an end in itself for high policing; crime control may also serve as a tool to generate information which can be used to maximise state coercion of a group or individual perceived as threatening the establish order. Crime is thus conceived as something which lends itself to manifold extrapolation.

(Adapted from Brodeur, 1983:513-4)

Indeed, the suggestion of a subtle shift from problem solving as an inclusive, co-operative process of ‘crime intelligence’ towards a less democratic process of ‘criminal intelligence’ gathering is apparent.

Though in reference to the argument that problem solving is becoming more scientific and increasingly ‘using’ the community as a police resource, it may be observed that there has been a merger of the ‘high’ and ‘low’ policing conceptions within problem solving practice (O’Reilly and Ellison, 2006). Indeed, this merger denotes an intrusion of the all encompassing ‘criminal intelligence’ in to the ‘crime intelligence’ arenas where problem solving branches into many spheres of life that hitherto would be governed by non-police agencies and civil society (Worall and Marenin, 1998). Therefore, problem solving activities are not necessarily geared towards solving individual instances of crime *per se*, but are in fact a ‘community’ means towards a ‘police’ justified end, thus cementing police monopoly in the problem solving processes (Lilley and Hinduja, 2006a).

A corollary of this ‘modern’ problem solving aspect is the concept of ‘risk’. Within the context of the prevailing audit society, it must be noted the police are constantly under pressure to make tangible the subtle, qualitative and subjective judgements of their community policing work (Power, 1999). Thus, contemporary police problem solving has recognised the efficacy of defining communities within territorial areas, rather than by interest or culture (Simon, 1988; Loader, 1999; Bradley, 1998; Innes, 2006). As argued Innes, by defining neighbourhoods in this fashion, it exploits a ‘sensitivity that people who live in the same area share inter-related fates in terms of their safety’ (2005:159).

However, it is important to take a step back from the practical arguments in the literature regarding the use of problem solving to identify risk. Indeed, within an era of New Public Management, it is contended there are now ‘forces’ which seek to instil in the police economic efficiency, as that ‘premised upon ‘best practice’, ‘what works’ and a non-ideological and apolitical logic of cost-effective evaluation and audit’ (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2001:313). In this regard, problem solving and its modern reiteration in the form of risk management appears to be part of the more general shift in policing towards

‘economic analysis...to foster a prospective re-orientation towards actuarial calculation and risk reduction...it shifts focus away from the retrospective workings of the criminal justice process...towards the physical environments and opportunity structures in which crime is committed’ (Zedner, 2006:85).

In relation to managerial and calculating policing, it has already been noted that problem solving can foster a return to the hierarchical, militaristic policing of the past. Therefore, as part of the risk-based approach to problem solving, it is no longer about holistic ‘thinking’ to involve interested and capable communities and agencies into a process. Instead, it may be understood as

‘an object stripped of contextuality, frame or observer. Uncertainty is displaced with knowledge, particularly knowledge about security as an object. Security is then something made up of limits and boundaries’ (De Lint and Virta, 2004:472).

Though examining the contemporary shift in the community policing philosophy to what may be termed ‘reassurance policing’, problem solving is more than just constructing boundaries and limits. Indeed, reassurance policing is also about problem solving’s ability to manage

‘the way in which the identification of particular sources of threat and danger (and by extension who we blame for them) refracts a given community’s disposition towards order and authority’ (Loader and Sparks, 2007:86).

Launched in October 2003, the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) is an interesting approach to contemporary problem solving. Based in the Police Reform Act 2002, it recognised falling *rates* of crime, but increasing *fear* of crime within society generally (HM Government, 2007; Millie and Herrington, 2005). Thus, it is premised on the fact that ‘visual signs of disorder serve as a signal of the unwillingness of residents to confront strangers, intervene in crime or call the police’ (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999:637). The key approach of the NRPP is to identify these ‘signal’ crimes and ‘control’ signals which can mediate and amplify perceptions of risk to communities (Innes, 2004b). Furthermore, it has yet to be identified within the literature what the long term effects of such a problem solving approach may have within the community policing context. But what is clear from the literature is that the future of problem solving, whether grounded in the general

philosophy of community policing (or not), is as much about actively managing the perceptions of police ability to deal with crime as it is about managing actual and potential risk as part of late modernity (Garland, 2001).

A corollary of the contemporary problem solving landscape under the umbrella of community policing, is the shift to a narrower ‘Neighbourhood Policing’ approach. Adopted by the Home Office as the defining paradigm for community policing, it is essentially about identifying ‘publics’ with a public. As a recognition of the limited understanding of ‘community’ more generally (Anderson, 1991), this approach has influenced the problem solving processes of community policing by

‘refocusing on the heterogeneity of neighbourhoods at the finest levels of spatial granularity...to customise the management of crime, and other public services, to better meet local needs’ (Williamson *et al.*, 2006:209).

As a complement to the National Reassurance Policing Programme, the precision data required for such quick and effective problems solving practice is premised upon a methodology of targeting, mapping, classifying and assigning based in a variety of criminogenic, demographic and deprivation indicators within a framework of performance management (Ashby, 2005; Chainey, 2005; Audit Commission, 2006). As is evident, ‘neighbourhood policing’ is even starting to creep into the vocabulary of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the PSNI above and beyond Policing with the Community (NIPB and PSNI, 2007).

But in overview of problem solving more generally, the literature would suggest a clear trajectory – it has progressed from simplistic notions of co-operative partnerships with the public to tackle local crime issues, towards an ultimate Cartesian merger of Brodeur’s conceptions of ‘high’ and ‘low’ policing. Thus, when combined with the police retention of monopoly on coercion, and the conduct of policing practices under the generic banner of community policing, Herbert (2001:459) contends that it allows the police to retain the appearance of community policing to shield ‘the actual practice of professional policing on steroids’.

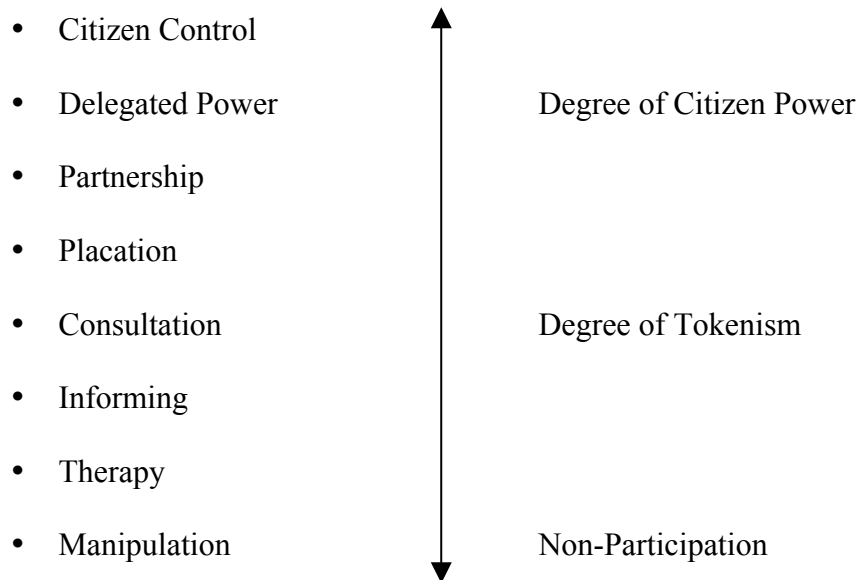
## 2.6 Partnership

At a basic level, the partnership approach to the community policing philosophy may be viewed as an essential ‘building block’ from which many of the underlying assumptions about this community-oriented style of policing may flow. As a key theme to the Criminal Justice Review (2000) which followed the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, partnership may be defined as

‘a co-operative effort to facilitate problems solving. The main objective of this partnership is to determine, through consultation, community needs and policing priorities...Partnerships should be geared towards shared or common goals, and towards reducing crime and the fear of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the quality of life of communities. Local context will often dictate the membership and mission of particular partnerships’ (PSNI, 2002a:8-9).

Indeed, with partnership premised on the fact that the police can not work in isolation (Dupont *et al.*, 2003), partnership approaches are as much an exercise in recognising the limitations of the police as they are in developing solutions to tackle crime issues with others (Myhill, 2006).

It is important to recognise that partnerships between the police and communities are not static entities. Kelling (2005) has recognised that partnerships may be viewed on a continuum, from collaboration through to active resistance. It has also been argued that in our diverse and pluralised society (characteristic of late modernity), only by developing genuine partnerships ‘can real progress be made towards a more civilised way of life...’ (Young, 1991:147). But with partnership as a fluid process not only in the *type* of collaboration, but also in the *function* between police and communities, it is apt to note Arnstein’s ‘Ladder of Participation’ which may be used to represent the role of partnership between police organisations and the communities they serve:



(Arnstein, 1969 cited in Myhill, 2006:6)

Thus, turning to Herbert (2006), he has further noted two theoretical models through which to examine the role (and underlying meaning) of partnerships between the police and public – the ‘subservience model’ and the ‘separation model’. Exploring each model in turn, it shall be possible to separate the literature and identify the key issues of partnership within the community policing literature.

### **2.6.1 The Subservience Model**

A simple assumption of the subservience model is that most Western democracies are not ‘police states’ insofar as the police are, to a greater extent, subservient and responsive to the needs of citizen security (Herbert, 2006). An initial inquiry would suggest that partnership between the police and the public is essentially about a broad egalitarian relationship as part of a ‘need for collaborative relationships with non-police agencies and individuals...’ (Wood and Marks, 2006:719). Though as shall be evidenced, such a basic partnership assumption is underpinned by a variety of complex and overlapping issues.

The need for a more effective partnership approach to policing was identified as far back as the Scarman Report (1981) which followed the Brixton riots, whereby ‘to make a reality of community involvement, consultation must reach into the local community...to promote agreed solutions to local problems both in the short term and in the long term’ (Home Office Circular, 1985 cited in Walker, 1990:120). In this sense, partnership should therefore be ‘defined in terms that prioritise public participation as a principle of good governance...’ (Ryan, 2007:1). Indeed, where partnership is defined in such terms, it has been argued that it creates both effective working and legitimacy for a partnership because the police are then open to (at least some) increased democratic oversight and reasoning from the community (Herbert, 2005).

Freidmann (1994:268) has contented that ‘if partnership is crucial to community policing and informal organisations are crucial to the partnerships, then support for community organising and education must be part of the planning and thinking about community policing’. Logically, if the partnership approach to community policing involves the community (or least their representatives) at all stages, it may help to increase effective working between the police and the community on matters of crime and police-community relations. In this regard the ‘police are more likely to influence the public’s views of, and demand for policing if the police have a strong working relationship with them’ (Bradley, 1998:vi).

Though beyond this recognition in the literature of a need to build trust and confidence through partnerships (Home Office, 2004; Casey, 2008), there are more



subtle aspects to the police acceding to citizen needs through a partnership approach. It must be understood that public agreement on the role of the police within any given community can vary significantly according to local community characteristics (Webb and Katz, 1997). Thus, no one partnership can therefore represent all the needs of an entire community at any one time. It is therefore necessary for the police to avoid aggregating community articulations through mere consultation ‘that too often...results in the acclamation of decisions already made’ (Ryan, 2007:18).

Based in the conceptions of social disorganisation theory (c.f. Shaw and McKay, 1942), it is interesting to note that ‘order results more so from informal control processes than from formal control strategies...’ (Wells *et al.*, 2006:525). Indeed, it is undoubtedly hard for a police-centric partnership to grasp many of these ‘subtle, informal processes’ which can be linked to concepts of social capital and collective efficacy within communities, especially when the police are only trained to ‘see’ crime and disorder issues (Putnam, 2000; Healy, 2004; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). The implications for police to be responsive to communities within the subservient model of partnership are therefore that they ‘may find success by directly getting information from residents about why they do not act upon local problems and then directly addressing these issues’ (Wells *et al.*, 2006:541). Such a contention has been further strengthened within the literature insofar as one of the reasons for the limited ability of community policing to significantly reduce crime is because most partnerships tend to fail in strengthening ‘broader community processes of community cohesion and organisation, which implicitly are assumed to underline community crime problems’ (Kerely and Benson, 2000:52).

## 2.6.2 The Separation Model

When examining the literature on partnership through the lens of the separation model, it may be used to focus attention on the inhibitors to the partnerships through a community policing approach. This has been denoted at a general level insofar as a

‘robust sense of distinction is collectively reinforced in a typical...police department. Officers construct themselves as autonomous and authoritative agents, sharply distinct from the citizenry’ (Herbert, 2006:486).

While such a position may retain its origins in the subjective world of police ‘canteen culture’ and an ‘us and them’ mentality within police organisations, the literature will be examined through a more appreciative inquiry of direct and indirect barriers to effective partnership which substantiates the thesis of the separation model (Chan, 2003; Waddington, 1999). Underpinning many of the problems associated with creating and maintaining effective police-community partnerships is evidence from the literature of significant differences in the core values of the police and the policed (He *et al.*, 2002). This has been further examined by Brogden and Nijhar (2005), who have looked beyond core values *per se* and highlighted the contrasting expectations between police and communities when working in partnership:



(Adapted from Brogden and Nijhar, 2005:Chpt 6)

Logically, where a partnership between police and a given community is based either on false, elevated or unrealistic expectations, it adds to the difficulty of aligning community attitudes with the community policing philosophy (and indeed police attitudes with the public’s) as part of an inclusive partnership approach (Groenewald and Peake, 2004:7). In this respect, the literature will now review a number of examples, not only using them to guide, but also to highlight some of the key lessons

with regard to policing through the separation lens of police-community partnerships.

Looking to Northern Ireland, as with many societies harbouring marginal and divided communities generally (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006), there is often a tension between the necessity and desirability of working in partnership with the police (Jarman, 2002; Walklate, 2003). With cultural and political barriers to police co-operation within communities, it may compound the more general disconnections which exist between police and working-class communities – who it is claimed know little about each other and were ‘the question is whether there is any desire to know the ‘other’ and to build a practical and effective relationship between the police and members of the local community...’ (Jarman, 2002:69). Webb and Katz (1997) argue that a separation model of partnership may be symptomatic of the fact there are no viable communities to mobilise or use for a partnership. Thus, as tends to be the case within many communities in Northern Ireland (and other sharply divided societies), ‘in some circumstances the police may be the only sign of community, of something in common, that is left to hold things together’ (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997:78). Here, the policy of partnership must remain authoritative and sharply distinct from the citizenry to exist at all. Though as evident from the literature, the separation thesis raises two further critical issues for the community policing philosophy more generally.

Firstly, it is argued that no partnership formed to tackle crime and disorder issues can be effective or successful without the resources and capacities of the police. Where communities either deliberately exclude the police, or the police separate themselves from a partnership for other reasons, partnerships will therefore lack the manpower, expertise, professionalism and training that *only* the police can offer (Gormally, 2004). By logical extension, where there is deliberate community organising to the exclusion of the police, it only serves to reinforce and make more justifiable a separatist approach to partnership and therefore police dominance in the first place.

Secondly, it is important not to assume that all members of a community are willing to enter into partnership with the police, further compounded by the fact

police may only be willing to form a partnership with those who they perceive to most closely mirror their own aspirations and objectives (Friedmann, 1992). But in reference to Northern Ireland, community-police relations can become a conduit for inter-communal relations (Topping, 2008a; Walker, 2001). Therefore, if a partnership approach between the police and the public is to overcome the potentially polarising tendencies of the separation model, partnership will require

‘a radically different conception of social order in which consideration is given to the conditions under which individuals or groups are prepared to co-operate...mutual recognition of difference is a preferable premise for community involvement than an assumed consensus’ (Crawford, 1995:122).

While the difficulties of partnership, as evidenced through the lens of the separation model are clear in divided and marginal communities, the literature also indicates that even where there is little or no inhibition to partnership with the police *per se*, how this partnership manifests itself is by no means free from difficulties. Taking the example of unilateral partnerships (such neighbourhood watch schemes), beyond the generally acceptance in the literature of their inability to reduce crime, fear of crime, or to increase the detection of crime, more subtle problems underpin this separatist approach to partnership (Fleming, 1995; Rosenbaum, 1987; Laycock and Tilley, 1995).

On the one hand, unilateral partnerships within passive communities can reinforce police feelings of authority, and therefore distinction, especially when people tend to cling tenaciously to the belief that the police are the only contemporary institution with the ability to deal with crime (Shearing, 2006a). On the other hand, it is also recognised within the literature that unilateral partnerships (such as neighbourhood watch) are easiest to implement and are over-represented in ‘soft areas’ of low crime, where such partnership tends to reflect class and income, rather than risk (Fielding, 2005; HMIC, 1997). Thus, where such separatist approaches to partnership between the police and the community are pursued, it may actually create divisions within communities and between neighbourhoods by defining neighbourhoods as respectable/non-respectable according to who is willing to co-operate with the police (Laycock and Tilley, 1995). Ultimately, far from acting

as an inclusive partnership under the auspices of the community policing philosophy, such a partnership approach can act as discriminating and divisive, making visible the intangible factors which inhibit co-operation with the police.

In overview of the 'separation model' of partnership, the literature would tend to suggest that such separatist approaches serve only to maintain and reinforce the disparity between the police and the public. Indeed, the lessons for partnership based on the separatist model are that at best, they should be avoided due to their divisive potential (Grabosky, 1992:267). Furthermore, Brogden and Nijhar (2005) have indicated that where partnership is premised upon such undemocratic introduction of the police in partnerships with the community (as powerful agents of the state), it reduces the overall accountability of their involvement. And far from the ideal of partnerships as co-productive mechanisms based on mutual adjustment between participants (Zhao, 1996), the police then become

'a mediator of collective identity, a social institution through which recognition and misrecognition are relayed, a sender of resonant-sometimes coercive signals about whose voices are to be heard or silenced...' (Loader, 2006:211).

## **2.7 Service Delivery**

The final area of the literature to be examined in relation to the PSNI's 'Policing with the Community' philosophy is that of service delivery, which

'must reflect the concept that the police exist to serve the community...to enable the delivery of a professional, community-centred service that is effective, efficient and appropriate and accountable' (PSNI, 2002a:8).

Though in spite of the fact the police are rarely a feature in most peoples' lives (Bayley, 1994), the reality of delivering a police service is more complex and nuanced than simply 'catching criminals' and a friendly 'bobby' on the beat. Therefore, the literature will be divided into two distinct categories: organisational pressures, to reflect the internal and external demands on the police to deliver a service to the community; and public realities, denoting the practical difficulties for the police to serve communities in an effective and acceptable manner within Northern Ireland.

### **2.7.1 Organisational Pressures on Service Delivery**

Within the overall framework of community policing, service delivery can be imagined as an attempt to reduce the social distance between the police and the public through a ‘customer-oriented’ approach (Loader, 2006). Indeed, the Labour Government’s support for such an approach is conspicuous in their 2001 report entitled ‘Open All Hours’, which noted the need for visible, accessible and familiar police, with the right numbers of officers in the right place at the right times (Povey, 2001). There are, however, a number of factors, both internal and external to police organisations, which the literature would suggest presents acute problems for the implementation of a ‘customer focused’ approach.

In reference to some of the internal police factors relating to service delivery, it is apt to note that in a study of the correlation between service culture and community policing:

‘high quality relationships between police officials and residents will lead to a high level of public satisfaction, which, in turn, has a significant impact on the citizen’s feelings of cooperation with community policing...’ (Pulhipongsiriporn and Quang, 2005:27).

The implications for police organisations in adopting a ‘service delivery’ approach therefore resonates with the more general applicability of community policing within a locale. Though beyond ‘keeping the queues down and the customers happy’ (Stephenson, quoted in *The Times*, 2009), the reality of service delivery within police organisations is more complex than merely improving relationships and attitudes with the public as ‘customers’.

As noted by Skogan (2006b), there tends to be a culture of scepticism within police organisations as to the delivery of community-oriented programmes. Thus, instead of community policing acting as the guiding principle to the delivery of a policing service, it is merely used as an ‘optional extra’ insofar as:

‘There it [community policing] lurks, waiting perhaps to be resurrected when a crisis of legitimacy again haunts the police, and they have to rediscover community policing in order to rebuild again their credibility with the community (Skogan, 2006b:10).

It is asserted that the dominant 'crime fighting' role of the police, which carries the most value within the core of police culture, heavily challenges the notion of community policing and its 'customer service' approach. Furthermore, at an intra-officer level this 'crime fighting culture' challenges the true 'cop' values of those officers who volunteer to carry out policing in this vein (Garcia, 2005; Chan, 2003).

Another symptom of the dominant police culture has been found to include the avoidance of 'risk taking', often associated with alternative and innovative community policing initiatives (Kiely and Peek, 2002). In this regard, it has been argued that service delivery within police organisations is merely about projecting an 'image' of service delivery within communities (Kappeler and Kraska, 1998). It is asserted that the police can also fall back, at any time, on the 'safety net' of local crime surveys as part of this imagery and as

'the consumers' view of the service provided...makes thinkable in calculable form a community diagnosis and a set of...realisable objectives and priorities...' (Stenson, 1993:381).

Loader (2006) further contends that such 'safety nets' create a 'trap' whereby service delivery is premised on responding uncritically to surveys and statistics as 'aggregated needs' and expectations, which he indicates is not practical for policing the needs of diverse communities.

Beyond some of the internal cultural struggles with the service delivery concept, there are also a number of external factors which shape the adoption of service delivery principles (or not) as part of the community-oriented approach. With the fiscal constraints of modern government on policing (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2001; Hepworth, 2007; Ashby *et al.*, 2007), combined with legal obligations for economy, efficiency, and effective in performance (as with the PSNI under the Police (NI) Act 2000), service delivery is not immune from the danger that

'the philosophy of economy, efficiency and effectiveness is forcing policing managers to concentrate their resources upon the quantifiable aspects of police work...' (Joint Consultative Committee, 1990 cited in Bennett, 1994:109).



Thus, with the rising culture of managerialism and audit in the police, there is a clear conflict between the type of demands required by the audit society (Power, 1999), and those required under the community policing philosophy. In reference to the latter, the service delivery associated with a community-oriented style of policing is often premised upon the more subtle, qualitative and proactive abilities of officers in terms of discretion and pro-active relationships to deal with crime issues. Though as Leggett (2002:59) succinctly observes, ‘of course, it is very difficult to measure the crimes that never were, so the effectiveness of crime prevention programmes tend to be measured by fluctuations in crime’. Here, the ‘Best Value’ regime, as introduced under the Local Government Act of 1999 (at least for England and Wales) and internalised within police practice under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Police (NI) Act 2000 for Northern Ireland) has become the dominant approach to ‘dealing’ with crime issues and delivering a service (Newburn, 2002).

With service delivery under such managerial pressures, and in combination with the police as the central, directing auspice within most policing initiatives, ‘targets’, as the new ‘watch word’ for police service delivery are having a detrimental impact upon community policing practice. With officers having to abandon their subtle, discretionary approaches to ‘hit targets’ such as arrests:

‘pressure to hit targets means the rank-and-file officers are more likely to make arrests and issue penalty notices for disorder and minor incidents, which would not have been recorded a decade ago’ (*Police Review*, 2007:5).

Furthermore, in combination with many of the internal resistances to service delivery as part of the community policing philosophy, the literature would indicate the reality of service delivery is something ‘other’ than the professional, citizen-centred customer service rhetoric of the PSNI’s Policing with the Community policy.

### 2.7.2 Public Realities of Service Delivery

At the public interface of police service delivery, a useful starting point within the literature denotes that the minimum that the police should expect to attain in an ever diversifying society is that ‘the public accept the police’s legitimacy and their lawful right to do what they do’ (Jones and Newburn, 2001:65). However, in satisfying the public as the ‘customer’, the complexity in achieving even this bare minimum shall now be explored.

An important issue in the literature is that citizens’

‘demands for police services will be affected by the character of interpersonal relations, particularly the vitality of primary social groups; by the level and distribution of wealth; and by the cultural value placed on maintaining tight-knit proximate groups’ (Bayley, 1994:137).

In this regard, community policing is not merely the delivery of a singular managerial standard of service across diverse social terrains. Instead, it should be viewed as a ‘process’ rather than an ‘entity’ – with the service delivered focusing upon the relational aspects of policing rather than definitional ones (Brookes, 2006).

Turning to the ‘relational’ aspects of service delivery in more detail, it is argued that:

‘if the goal of community policing programmes is to enhance the relationship between the police and the public, how satisfied citizens feel about police performance can have a significant impact on the citizens’ feelings of involvement in and cooperation with community policing activities’ (Cheurprakobkit and Bastsch, 2001:450).

Such a proposition is further evidenced in reference to Skogan’s (2006a) study of asymmetry in the encounters between officers and the public. In spite of the fact that it was found the public hold police responsible for crime and disorder as representatives of the state, positive public perceptions of service delivery *per se* did not correlate with better ‘results’ by the police. Indeed, finding that the public rarely credit the police for ‘doing a good job’ (found not to be statistically significant), a bad encounter or experience was found to have up to 14 times more impact than a ‘good’ one. And at community level, a bad encounter can further negate positive perceptions built over long periods of time (Skogan, 2006a).

As part of Skogan's thesis, the availability of resources and its effect on service delivery can be further evidenced. Using Jackson and Boyd's (2005) 'minority threat hypothesis', they contend that:

'as levels of deviance increase and resources become scarce...patrol work groups must develop rules that allocate officer time, that is, they must develop prioritisation regimes. As the levels of deviance increase, more incidents must be pushed to the lower echelons of the prioritisation continuum in order to manage increasing workloads' (Klinger, 1997 cited in Jackson and Boyd, 2005:34).

Therefore, many low level, quality of life issues upon which community policing is premised can be 'demoted' within the wider context of police priorities. Logically, this may increase the chances of a bad encounter because of stretched resources or limited time for officers to deal individual complaints.

One way in which the police can circumvent the difficulties is through a process of 'averaging up' citizen satisfaction through the medium of the generic crime survey. As noted by Brogden and Nijhar (2005), far from acting as legitimate measure of crime and citizen satisfaction with policing, such surveys are used to create a 'community face' to policing, constructing and confining citizen input to what can be observed and done (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005).

Black (2000:602) further argues that such an 'artificial' approach to service delivery acts as an 'autopoietic system': that is, one in which 'self-referential, self-generative, recursive systems of communication...produce and reproduce themselves'. Espoused in crime surveys, police standards and satisfaction surveys, the police constantly produce tangible and visible indicators of satisfaction, attuned to the public's fears and anxieties (Topping, 2008a). But at the same time, the constant recourse to notions of 'delivering a service' through community policing obviates the reality of the policing more generally in that:

'the wholesome notions of community with what is inherently problematic social practice tends to elide the adversarial aspect of policing by implying whatever is done is done in the interest, and with the consent, of the people...the fact that policing is usually done to someone, as well as on someone's behalf, is conveniently forgotten' (Dixon, 2004:252).

Such an orientation towards public satisfaction, as a legitimisation of police service delivery has also generated a number of issues within the more specific context of Northern Ireland's transitional landscape. As part of the official discourse and 'memory' in Northern Ireland, such surveys, as measures of service delivery have been used to construct the Province not only as a low crime society, but also as a measure of police legitimacy (Brogden, 2000; Ellison, 2000; Mulcahy, 2000). However, it must be remembered that public satisfaction (as articulated through such surveys) should not necessarily be assumed to represent the explicit, empirical actions and crime reduction strategies of the police. Indeed, within many areas of Northern Ireland where police legitimacy is still contested, the lack of overt police presence and action may actually generate a high degree of satisfaction with the police, simply because of the reduced potential for situations of confrontation (Topping, 2008a). Indeed, the 'problematics' of service delivery may be viewed on two levels. Firstly, public belief in social institutions such as the police (and therefore satisfaction with them) should be based upon respect rather than economy and efficiency as 'the kind of relationship articulated in a customer satisfaction survey' (Fielding, 2005:465). Secondly, where the performance of the police is in question (either at the political or community levels), bridging the gap between the increasingly complex nature of service delivery and the simple desires of the public for familiar faces and quick responses, may require a whole new way of thinking as to what constitutes effective service delivery (Povey, 2001).

As evidenced throughout the organisational and public divisions in the literature regarding service delivery, many over-riding factors, from fiscal policy through to police-community interaction can impact greatly on the actual and perceived delivery of the policing service. But in overview of the literature, it is argued the most common measures used to assess how 'effectively' police deliver policing (such as arrests, clearance rates and satisfaction surveys) have little to do with the concepts of community policing in the first place (Jesilow and Parsons, 2000). This point is further explicated by Manning (1977:329), who contends that

'the bigger questions, those of crime prevention...stand somewhere in the chaos and darkness of the social world and are dragged in and transmogrified by the little routines of policemen. If the problem of policing is seen in these

terms, it is unlikely that grasping at the micro-outputs of the entropy-fighting games of policemen (such as crime statistics) will do much more than capture reflections of police portraits. To see this is to polish the police mirror and to show that policemen spend much time looking at themselves’.

Furthermore, from a public perspective, the literature would indicate that it is necessary for the police to look beyond communities as discrete entities with subsets of predictable ‘values’. Rather, service delivery is about the broader, relational aspects of the community policing philosophy, and the effective incorporation of accountability, partnership, problem solving and partnership into the delivery of a coherent policing service.

## 2.8 Summary of Policing with the Community Literature

In overview of Policing with the Community, both dilemmas to, and definitions of the concept have been posed in equal measure. On the one hand, it is the amorphous and fluid nature of the concept which supplies the centrifugal forces for policing to be 'taken out' to the community level, while providing the tools for community interaction and intervention. On the other hand, it is the difficulty in reconciling this fluidity with the 'modern' working practices of police organisations which supplies the centripetal forces that limit the utility and translation of the concept into police action 'on the ground'.

One of the biggest issues to emerge from the community policing literature is a difficulty in aligning the holistic nature of this policing style with the more rigid notions of police work. In this regard, accounting for what the police 'do', through to involving, interacting with *and* delivering upon what is expected by communities is as much a 'holy grail' for police organisations as it is defining the concept at an academic level (Bayley, 1988). At any one time, the community policing philosophy requires that police accede to the context and demands of a variety of partners, agencies and communities, while simultaneously managing those demands as part of the broader police function.

With community policing creating an infinite 'pool' of action and expectation between police and communities, the literature would suggest that resources (and policy) must be focused upon providing the necessary skills, tools and powers for police officers to work autonomously at the local level. Indeed, any attempts to centralise, standardise or make uniform the concept outside the parameters of local context and conditions are at best, be a waste of resources. Thus, while the core guiding principles of Policing with the Community are not in themselves problematic, it is their implementation from a 'top-down' rather than a 'bottom-up' approach, which the literature would suggest is a key limiting factor to the realisation of the concept by police organisations.

## 2.9 The Governance of Security/Policing from the Bottom Up

Having explored the vast and varied literature with regard to community policing, the literature review is to focus upon the concept of the ‘governance of security’. As a complement to the literature on community policing, the governance of security (or security governance) provides a theoretical framework for the ‘bottom-up’ community perspective on policing and security, rather than the ‘top-down’ police perspective. Through the issues of accountability; devolved and plural policing provision (empowerment); networks and nodes (partnership); community capacity in crime control (problems solving); and the nature of security governance in Northern Ireland (service delivery), this section will highlight the complex theoretical issues within this relatively new and developing academic area.

At basic level, the *raison d’être* for considering the governance of security is to provide a framework for the understanding of the roles of non-state agencies, groups and stakeholders who have an interest in broad policing issues (Wood and Marks, 2006). Indeed, it is argued that the governance of security is a natural extension of the community policing philosophy, insofar as the

‘desire on the part of public policing institutions...to mobilise citizens to participate in the governance of security is reflected in the shift in many police departments towards the adoption of community policing’ (Kempa *et al.*, 1999:210).

Contained within this logic is an implicit recognition that the police can no longer take for granted their operational or strategic primacy in *all* policing and crime issues. Bound up with this recognition is also the fact that it

‘is more effective and socially just if varied and sometimes untapped or ignored sources of knowledge and capacity are bound together through new institutional and procedural arrangements’ (Wood and Marks, 2006:724).

Furthermore, the literature contends that normative ‘thinking’ on the ‘possibilities’ for security ‘configurations’ has been rather limited (Garland, 1996). Thus, it is towards such thinking to which this section shall now turn.

### 2.9.1 Accounting for Security Governance from the Police Perspective

When considering the literature on security governance, its foundations may be seen to have a broad base insofar as governance, in the context of crime and policing issues, is about a

‘more inclusive term, concerned with creating the conditions for ordered and collective action, often including agents in the...non-profit, as well as within the public sector’ (Milward and Provan, 2000:360).

In this regard, the governance of security is about the co-production of ‘security’ as a wider ‘public good’ between various governmental, community, neighbourhood and public sector organisations (Ren *et al.*, 2006). Thus, by improving the democratic co-ordination of such ‘otherness’ to security production, security governance can both reduce deficits in the provision of security by the state *and* manage such relationships within the parameters of the law and public objectives (Loader and Walker, 2006; Marks and Goldsmith, 2006; Shearing and Wood, 2003a). However, in spite of the fact that ‘there is no monopoly on knowledge, or even no single vantage point from which the whole can be observed...’ (Black, 2000:599), it is argued that the ‘police vocabulary’ does not sufficiently recognise, or represent the diverse ways in which security is exercised in modern, democratic states (Rose and Miller, 1992). Also bound up with the heterogeneity of the modern society are a multiplicity of social issues which simultaneously contribute to the problems of crime and disorder, while demanding an integrated, holistic approach from numerous auspices and providers from within and outside the state (Wood and Marks, 2006). Johnston and Shearing (2003) suggest that at least this *recognition* of the multi-dimensional approach to crime, where the possibilities of involving agencies other than the state are considered, is positive for the development of security governance debates. Though as succinctly captured by Baker (2002:30):

‘the ubiquity of contemporary non-state policing raises important normative and policy issues about what attitude democracies should take...Does it constitute a vital assistance to weak states faced with under-resourced public police, or does it constitute a threat to the state by allowing a function to be conducted by private elements over which the state should have monopoly’.



But whether such considerations are taken from the perspective of a need to reduce crime, or indeed ‘increase community’ to achieve specific policing objectives, the state ultimately retains the power to manipulate and subject such security ‘others’ to rules and constraints which limit any threat to the governing status quo (Nelken, 1985).

In tandem with what has been termed the ‘decentring’ of the police’s provision of security, it is further argued that the loci of such power is also dispersing. However, whatever the configuration of security provision, the police can

‘nonetheless, insist upon its right to delineate and uphold the normative structures essential both to protect the public interest in policing and maintain the ligatures of civil society’ (Zedner, 2006:92-3).

Logically, the police can not therefore be excluded from, nor will they allow themselves to be excluded from security governance considerations in which they could or should have a stake. In part, this may be due to the unwillingness of the police to release their monopoly on security to those who they neither know nor trust (Gormally, 2003). And in part, due to the fact it is practically difficult to introduce such new ways of thinking into the traditional culture of the police as primary providers of security in society (Wood *et al.*, 2008).

Though whatever the arguments on ‘accounting’ for security governance from the police perspective, it is argued the state police will continue to remain at the centre of initiatives to govern security for the immediate future (Johnston and Shearing, 2003). But in light of the diverse, plural providers of security in modern society, the literature would also suggest that where such thinking on police-centrism prevails, it will limit the democratic possibilities for effective co-operation and engagement with ‘others’ because of a refusal to acknowledge the various interpretations of order between the auspices and providers of security in contemporary society (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005).

### **2.9.2 Accounting for Security Governance from the Community Perspective**

From the community perspective, it is important to account for security governance in comparison with that of the state police. As noted by McLaughlin (2007), the police may be conceived as ‘multiple reality’ organisations with a relatively mechanical *obligation* to deal with a variety of social problems across myriad spatial and cultural contexts to which there are no single solution. In contrast to such obligations, the community perspective would suggest that problems within communities and how they are dealt with (as the centres of such ‘multiple realities’) create

‘a sense of mutuality among the people of a community by supplying a focus for group feeling...deviance makes people more alert to the interests they share in common and draws attention to those values which constitute the “collective consciousness” of the community’ (Erickson, 1966 cited in Nolan *et al.*, 2004:101).

Thus, based on the interactionist theories of Howard Becker (1963), accountability from the community perspective supplies an understanding of this ‘mutuality’, along with the justifications and rationales which underpin community responses to problems (McLaughlin, 2007). On the one hand, this helps to inform understandings of security governance activity and how that is accounted for at the local level. On the other hand, it helps to inform the multiple realities in which activity around policing and security must be considered.

It is also contended in the literature that when accounted for using this perspective, security governance holds the potential for the relocation of responsibility for crime problems (along with solutions and responses) into the hands of communities (Loader and Sparks, 2007). In this context, accountability may be viewed

‘in terms of personal power and the capacity to accept responsibility – not to blame others but to recognise your own collusion in that which prevents you from being yourself, and in doing so, overcome it and achieve responsible autonomy and personal power’ (Rose, 2000:334).

However, as part of accounting for the more informal mechanism of ‘community’ within security governance theory, there is a need to understand how and why non-state groups, organisations and people manage their activities in regard to crime and policing issues. Secondly, it is about recognising the different sorts of human, social and cultural capital within an area which contribute to the former (Walklate, 2003; Wood, 2004). Thus, accounting for security governance from the community perspective is about an

‘interpretative approach that holds beliefs and practices are constitutive of one another. Practices could not exist if people did not have apt beliefs. Beliefs... would not make sense without the practices to which they refer’ (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006:2).

Logically, having identified community capacities and the rationalities and beliefs which support security governance activities, it is important to explore the junctures at which security governing in relation to state policing can be effectively connected into a coherent format (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993).

Furthermore, in accounting for the security governance activities of non-state actors, it is important that such activity is situated within a social context. At a basic level, security governance may be premised upon, and mediated by: interdependence among community members and organisations in the sense that an event that happens to one member is likely to affect all members; frequency of contact between members of a group or community; a recognition of members and non-members within a group; and a common goal or goals among the members, either implicit or explicit (Nolan *et al.* 2004:105). However, in accounting for the social contexts which may support or hinder security governance, it may be neither universal nor evenly spread.

In this regard, Kempa *et al.* (1999) has argued that non-state policing can be seen most clearly at the ‘edges’ of the welfare liberal framework. This may be further elaborated in reference to Granovetter (1983:18) who has noted that local interest in regard to security governance tends to ‘be more frequent in the lower classes because of the tendency towards homophilly and the pyramid shaped class structure of modern societies, with few at the top and masses at the bottom’. Thus,

in accounting for the local considerations which underpin security governing, two interesting points arise. Firstly, it is those groups at the margins of society who have the most to benefit from localised security governance considerations. Secondly, it is also those at the margins who possess the local knowledge in regard to the nature and causes of underlying problems and who are best placed to develop effective solutions (Kempa and Shearing, 2002).

Though importantly for the sustainability and legitimacy of local, community-based security governance and its interface with the police, is the fact that

‘if informal institutions render law more accessible to the disadvantaged, they also render the disadvantaged more accessible to the state, and the latter consequence may be the more significant’ (Abel, 1982 cited in Roche, 2002:527).

Security governance may therefore be viewed as an effective link for the state into the social margins regarding crime and policing issues. As Kempa and Shearing (2005) contend, where local interests in security governance are effectively managed and incorporated into government agendas, it can both improve relations between state and non-state auspices and providers of security and aid in mutual recognition and accountability for activities within acceptable legal norms and social parameters.

## **2.10 Devolved and Plural Policing**

Having examined some of the issues in regard to accountability and security governance, it is now important to examine the literature on the concept of devolved and plural policing provision. Indeed, it is generally recognised that policing itself has become pluralised in terms of increasingly fragmented and dispersed authorisation of security more generally. The literature will therefore be explored from the viewpoint that the police are now part of a more varied arrangement of policing and security providers within contemporary society (Crawford and Lister, 2006). Thus, the literature will consider security governance theory on devolved and plural policing from the perspective of both state and community interests.

### 2.10.1 Police Perspectives on Devolved Policing

As noted by Bayley and Shearing (2001:24), ‘as societies become more complex, so do the security needs of their people’. But even within the most settled of Western democratic societies, the demand for security may be seen to exceed the state’s capacity to provide it. In this regard, it is arguable that the state police can no longer claim monopoly on policing (Dupont *et al.*, 2003). Thus, in line with debates as to the ‘place’ of the state police in contemporary society, Shearing (2001c) has questioned their place within the twenty first century as a period characterised by the proliferation of auspices and providers of security.

Though beyond even a minimal role for the state police, an issue that dominates the literature regarding devolved and pluralised policing is that of private security provision. As part of the ‘hollowing out’ of the state and the separation between the government and the provision of security, the rise of private, commercial security is a fact of the contemporary policing landscape (Milward and Provan, 2000; Crawford, 2006a). With approximately eight times as many private sector security employees in the United Kingdom in comparison to the full time public police, it represents a sustained growth in such non-state security provision over the last 30 years (*ibid.*; Shearing and Stenning, 1981). Thus, it is based in part, on the logic that government bureaucracies are less efficient than the market because they can not effectively take advantage of *local knowledge* (Hayek, 1989 cited in Bayley and Shearing, 2001:25).

However, the pluralisation of policing within the broad theme of security governance is not restricted solely to private security provision. It must be noted that the police organisation is itself fragmenting and pluralising, along with the increased devolution of responsibility for providing security through legislative partnerships, espoused in the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 (Johnston, 2005; Johnston and Shearing, 2003). Though while it remains important to be aware of the *commercial* and *organisational* pluralisation of policing in contemporary society, it is not the intention here to review each of these ‘fields’ of pluralisation individually. Rather,

the intention is to examine the implications of the pluralisation of security in reference to some of the more overarching theoretical considerations.

In line with the objectives of plural security provision as a means of managing the complex security needs of modern society, it is argued that the economic rationalisation and provision of security goes hand-in-hand with its pluralisation:

‘hence, the continuum approach, with the ‘public’ and ‘private’ at each end, and the various and unpredictable combination of pluralisation and commodification in the middle, seems more appropriate to depicting the current situation’ (Dupont, 2006b:87).

But contained within the unpredictable ‘void’ between public and private considerations of security are a number of issues which command attention.

Firstly, it has been argued that there is a need for better ‘maps’ of such plural security provision within contemporary society (Ayling and Grabosky, 2006). This contention has been reinforced by Crawford (2006a:467), who indicates that

‘it is less easy to differentiate between styles of policing dependent upon, or reducible to, the characteristics of those who provide or even authorise policing...’.

Secondly, the reality of pluralised security governance is that in spite of the myriad partnership or networked configurations which facilitate the provision of security, the loci of power remains at the ‘centre’, and therefore with the public police (Shearing, 1996). Here, it seems that with the state police as one of the few ‘constant variables’ within the unpredictable ‘void’ of security governance, they retain the ability to specify the parameters of (and therefore direct) our irreducible ‘map’ of security governance with the calculating efficiency of the market and whatever strict standards of conduct and co-operation they wish to dictate (Fleming and Rhodes, 2005; Gilboy, 1998).

But in line with the theories related to devolved and pluralised policing more generally, it is also important to consider, from the state perspective, the associated rises of the ‘risk society’ and the accompanying actuarial practices of modern

policing and security provision (Garland, 2001; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). It may be observed that there is a growing police orientation

‘towards information gathering, anticipatory engagement, proactive intervention, systematic surveillance, and rational calculation of results...an ethos comparable to that found in the commercial security sector’ (Johnston, 2000 cited in Wood, 2004:37).

However, the use of such economic and calculating considerations by the police has had an unintended consequence. Namely that we are now witnessing the severing of policing and security considerations with the principles of democracy and social justice in an attempt to provide *public goods*, rather than security in the interest of the public good - an approach to policing and security which has been described as ‘too thin’ (Shearing and Wood, 2003a).

In this regard, the literature on security governance from a police perspective appears to indicate that the pluralisation and devolution of ‘policing’ in conjunction with the public is far from an opportunity to be ‘embraced’ (Shearing, 2006b). Rather, the devolution of policing and security is moving towards a ‘new’ orientation: one which seeks to balance the security needs of our complex society with a-social market efficiency. Thus, the pluralisation and devolution of policing is then about simultaneously streamlining the ‘steering and rowing’ approach to security governance, while dissolving accountability for policing within the growing diversity of commercial, contractual and partnership approaches upon which devolved policing is premised (Osborne and Gaebler, 1994; Loader, 2000).



### **2.10.2 Community as an Auspice of Security Provision**

Within the broad context of devolved security governance, at the community level it is interesting to note that

‘it is now virtually impossible to identify any function within the governance of security in democratic states that is not, somewhere and under some circumstances, performed by non-state authorities as well as state ones’ (Johnston and Shearing, 2003:32).

Indeed, one of the challenges in recognising what may be termed an ‘uneven patchwork’ of security governing at the non-state community level is to both recognise and regulate latent community capacities which provide policing (whatever form that may take) – to promote both social cohesion *and* connect such capacities to the wider state and therefore ‘public good’ (Shearing and Wood, 2003a; Loader, 1999; 2000).

It is also contended that as part of devolved and plural policing, there is a need to be wary of an overall increase in the total amount of social control, especially in the Foucauldian sense of who ‘owns’ such knowledge and power. However, what is important is that an increase in the ‘sum’ of social control at or through the community level should not necessarily be considered as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ insofar as ‘governing security is a function of complex conditions...which cannot be prejudged’ (Johnston and Shearing, 2003:12). As neatly summarised by Loader and Walker (2001:17), there is no theory within the pluralism discourse which defines ‘where desirable order maintenance ends and where the undesirable reproduction of order begins’. Therefore, contained within this logic is a need to more fully understand (the potential for devolved) community-based security governance and its rationales in order to provide an effective link to the wider ‘public good’ (Crawford, 2006b; Shearing, 2000b). Though in reference to the fact that state policing tends to concentrate little upon community capacities or knowledge, nor affords many resources to develop such capacities or knowledge:

‘civil society as an auspice of security provision faces a different challenge: while it is often very rich in legitimacy, it is generally poor in resources,

which limit its options for the authorisation and funding of effective security arrangements' (Dupont *et al.*, 2003:338).

In spite of the potential benefits for the effective mobilisation of local, community-based resources and capacities which can include: the wide range of 'services' that may be provided; working in less conventional, innovative ways; experimenting with new models and practice; and independence and advocacy with regard to policy comment, the community role in governing security would appear to be at best constrained (CJINI, 2006a). This point was recently conceded by one of the former Patten Commissioners, Clifford Shearing, who denoted a timidity by the Government in allowing communities similar powers for governance direction as they would to the private, commercial agents in regard to governing policing (Kempa and Shearing, 2005; Topping, 2008a).

In this regard, there would appear to be a prioritisation of private over community capacities – or at least a preference for those who can be identified, regulated and 'costed' within government objectives (Loader, 2000). However, an unintended consequence of this prioritisation of 'private versus community' is the fact that our 'uneven patchwork' of security governance is therefore determined by willingness (and ability) to pay, which itself gives rise to new forms of solidarity, identification and subjective orders based upon exclusion and division – a far cry from the need to promote an overarching 'public good' and social cohesion as part of the new directions in the governance of security (Loader, 1999). In this regard, it is further argued that the tendency of the state to exclude the community from security governance considerations is having a subtle, if insidious effect: by causing an erosion of 'the idea that public safety is inexorably linked with the quality of our associations with others...' (ibid.:385). Thus, the normative question of 'public security for whom?' in our 're-feudalised' and plural security society becomes evident (Blakely, 2007; Stenson, 2005; Johnston and Shearing, 2003).

A final issue with regard to considering devolved security governance from the community perspective, is that for communities characterised by political, social and economic disadvantage and disorganisation, there is arguably *more* need for Government and police action, not a market-based, auto-regulated *reduction* in

intervention (Jones, 2007). Therefore, devolved and plural security provision from (at least from the community perspective) is fated to continue as a 'poor relation' alongside the a-social and pro-market trajectory of current government policy. And unless more attention, resources and authority is devolved to alternative, community-based providers of security governance, the extent to which it can contribute to the 'public good' of policing will remain at best, limited.

## **2.11 Local Capacities for Security Governance**

In reference to security governance discourse, Baker (2002) has noted that within transitional democracies, non-state policing by formal and informal community groups is a reality of the security landscape. One of the underlying premises of such non-state ‘policing’, outside arguments relating to police legitimacy and security deficits, is the conception of

‘the community’ and the attendant norms and standards implicit in ‘membership’... integrated within all the practices of everyday life...’ (Rose, 1996:340).

Indeed, those who deviate outside communal ‘norms and values’ may be subject to some form of non-state ‘policing’ (in its broadest sense). With reactions to such behavioural aberrations strongly affected by the normative cultural climates and social parameters created within communities (Tyler, 1990), they are as much about managing the deviation itself as they are about governing community self direction in dealing with crime and policing issues (Marks and Goldsmith, 2006). It is thus to the issues of social and community capacities and community self-direction around the governance of security to which attention shall now turn.

### 2.11.1 Social Capacity and Security Governance

A simplistic view of the capacity for a given community to ‘create order’ and social control may be seen to lie in the processes of socialisation and informal discipline (Bayley and Shearing, 2001). Though beyond the term ‘community’ *per se* (Rose, 1996; Anderson, 1991; Delanty, 2003; Karn, 2006; Fremeaux, 2005), within the security governance it may be conceptualised as a means of reducing the random heterogeneity of individuals in regard to solving problems in the community (Greene and Taylor, 1988). In this respect, ‘community’ may therefore be seen to take on a number of defining characteristics within a security governance context, which include: community as a set of attitudes towards crime and policing; as a defence against ‘outsiders’; as homogeneous in terms consensus on crime and policing; and as a shared social space within which to manage policing and crime problems (Crawford, 1995). Though beyond this basic conception, it is also necessary to explore the ‘function’ of community in dealing crime and policing issues insofar as

‘the gap between the level of community demands and the available resources of existing organisations tends to detract from the legitimacy of the established order, creating a climate which fosters community innovation’ (Perry *et al.*, 1976:54).

Indeed, with regard to the function of a given community’s capacity and abilities to support ‘innovation’ within security governance ‘thinking’ is the recurring theme of social capital. Ren *et al.* (2006:466) have noted that social capital is important for citizen participation within community networks whereby ‘these networks facilitate coordination and communication among citizens in problem solving’. Though at this point, it is important to further define the concept of social capital, both in terms of its properties and its utility within the security governance literature.

As a concept, social capital may be used to ‘draw attention to the fact that individual lives depend not only on individual characteristics, but also on the resources (capital) which result from the relationships’ (Morrow, 2006:66). Thus, social capital is concerned with relations linking individuals into networks, where

such networks and contacts are accumulated and developed over time (Anheiser and Kendall, 2002). Thus, it may be further defined in terms of its function when considered as

‘not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of individuals who are within the structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure...making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence’ (Coleman, 1994:302).

Beyond this basic description of social capital, it may also be used as a metaphor to denote important social capabilities which underpin issues of security governance, including: ‘social networks, trust, norms and sanctions in facilitating collective action’ (Healy, 2004:10); and as a ‘community ideology’ which can create obligations on individuals or groups of individuals to act in the interests of something other than themselves (Coleman, 1994). Though whatever the degree of ‘obligation’ conferred upon a community to act within the goals of a collective interest, there are two key elements within a security governance context must now be explored in more detail.

Firstly, participation and association within communities produces associative activity which itself generates numerous contacts and exposes participants to social diversity. Secondly, such civic participation also leads to the development of ‘critical networks’ which allow people to gain access to embedded community resources, further developing social capital (Enns *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, if adequately sustained, social capital within a community can lead to further and facilitation and co-operation between groups of individuals (Fukuyama, 1999). Where there is at least a minimal degree of such civic participation and association within a community, it further creates what Tonkiss and Passey (1999:269) have termed an ‘institutional framework for social solidarity’. In this context, such associations form

‘part of the social infrastructure of society that makes the generation of trust possible...and that at least makes it easier for trust relations and trusting attitudes...and to re-enforce themselves within a population’ (Anheiser and Kendall, 2002:344).

Thus, where such social institutional frameworks do exist, it is argued to further help to reduce ‘transactional costs’ of interaction between people and groups, while encouraging civic values such as tolerance and empathy, important for supplying the focus and parameters for community responses to crime and quality of life issues (Morrow, 2006; Greene and Taylor, 1988).

In view of Putnam’s (2000) more generic notions of civic participation with regard to social capital (and latterly regarding security governance), Pilcher and Wallace (2007) have highlighted three important benefits for communities where such organising exists. Firstly, where organising is based upon more formal avenues of association, such as through community-based groups, it can act as a legitimating entity for democratic participation at the community level. Secondly, where informal associations are dominant, such as through social networks, it creates normative obligations for individual participation in community objectives, whereby investment in social relations creates a simple expectation in returns. And finally, both formal and informal avenues of organising can both complement and substitute for each other where necessary to deal with community problems. Therefore, in regard to security governance, such ‘arranging’ may help to develop reciprocity between community members, expand societal knowledge (outreach) and norms, and develop the co-operative arrangements required to achieve group and individual mobilisation towards locally-based objectives around crime and policing issues (Healy, 2004).

Finally, in terms of relating this associative thinking more closely to the concept of security governance, it is clear that community capacity is premised on, but not controlled by any one single individual or group. Thus, the associations facilitated by social capital within a security governance thinking is about combining

‘social skills and resources needed to effect positive change in neighbourhood life...social capital is the essence of social control for it is the very force collectives draw upon to enforce order. It is what enables groups to enforce norms and, as a result, to increase their level of informal social control’ (Rose and Clear, 1998:454).

### 2.11.2 Community Capacity and Security Governance

Beyond some of the concerns with regard to social capacities at the level of *gesellschaft*, it is also important to explore the literature at the level of *gemeinschaft*, or local community rather than societal level (Bell and Newby, 1971). Outside the rather nebulous vision of social capital as a conduit for policing through community organising, relations and interdependence, there are a number of issues within the literature which must be addressed in regard to *community* capacity, problem solving and security governance (Volker *et al.*, 2007).

According to Gilchrist (2004), communities do not just arise from a generic set of local circumstances, but are in fact constructed by its members. While residents within a given community may not expect to reside in crime-free environments, it is the channelling and expression of discontentment into social action which defines the parameters of tolerance and organising with regard to crime and policing problems as part of that ‘construction’ (Foster, 1995; Gamson, 1990; Grinc, 1994).

Related to the to the notion of ‘channelling’ social capacities on local policing and crime issues is the concept of collective efficacy. This may be defined as collective action against problem behaviour within communities, along with the willingness of the public to intervene for a common good, dependent upon ‘conditions of mutual trust and solidarity among neighbours’ (Sampson *et al.*, 1997:919). However, what is key to community mobilisation is the process through which the problem is ‘framed’, whereby

‘moral, rational, and pragmatic persuasion through conversation is the key element...and that collective action frames are a valuable resource to help create consensus over the specific forms of behaviour requiring control and over the specific ways of achieving control’ (Matsueda, 2006:24).

Thus, effective ‘community problem solving’ is about the ability of key individuals to articulate the context of local problems in ways which facilitate action and promote solutions.

At this point, a link in the literature between collective efficacy and social capital becomes increasingly clear with regard to the framework for organising



around crime and policing issues within a locale. Conceptualising social capital as the organising framework for community mobilisation, collective efficacy may be viewed as the practical framing and outworking of such organising. Thus, individuals and groups are more likely to intervene (or contribute to solutions) in problems when their community is characterised by such cohesion *and* is characterised by those who can frame issues in a fashion which promotes consensus and action (Wells *et al.*, 2006).

However, high levels of collective efficacy and social capital do not necessarily represent something unquestionably 'positive' with security governance considerations. As noted by Fukuyama (1999:1), where communities are characterised by too much social capital in terms of insular bonding capital, or their 'framing' of problems is too narrowly conceived, it may create what is termed 'inbred democracies' with communities shielded from the outside world and objective influence. Thus, it may be observed that

'the dominant norms associated with strong communities may be damaging to the confidence and identity of anyone whose preferences or activities deviate from the defined 'standard' of acceptable behaviour...Communities that are closed to outside influence and scrutiny may become stagnant and isolated from the rest of society' (Gilchrist, 2004:2004:9).

In this regard, 'weak ties' to outside groups and influence are required to maintain both diversity and vitality as part of community organising and activity (Coleman, 1994). It is further contended that where such insularity exists, it can create intra-group community competition, affecting both macro-level cohesion and restricting groups within communities from forming into what may be termed an 'effective mass' to deal with problems (Enns *et al.*, 2008; Forrest and Kearns, 2001). It is also interesting to note (especially within the context of Northern Ireland) that in societies which may be considered as weak and/or conflicted democracies, civil society groupings tend to be characterised by a narrow radius of trust, further restricting the 'circle' of co-operative norms (Fukuyama, 1999). As evidenced through recent research into the voluntary and community sector within Northern Ireland, it is a theory which holds practical application, especially between Protestant and Catholic communities (Acheson *et al.*, 2004; Acheson *et al.*, 2006).

In overview, there needs to be a ‘balance’ in the exercise of capacities designed to deal crime and policing issues. Where communities, in organising around such issues become too insular, they are unlikely to develop sustainable norms as part of the state’s provision of policing, or within the wider framework of civil society. And where they are too ‘open’, exogenous influences will destabilise the norms which provided the basis for their capacities in the first instance (Enns *et al.*, 2008). Though importantly within broader ‘thinking’ about the governance of security, when the need for ‘social control’ strays beyond the immediate capacities or knowledge of a given community (or groups which comprise it), problems must be approached with a degree of democratic and egalitarian reasoning only available through the formal, state-based provision of policing and security. Therefore, while communities may possess the will for managing security governance, clear parameters of those limits are necessary insofar as some decisions to be made in the deliver of local security governance ‘require a degree of detachment and neutrality which may be inconsistent with public participation’ (Grabosky, 1992:251).

## 2.12 Networked and Nodal Considerations

Within the governance of security literature, it is also important to establish the ‘framework’ which supports security governance functioning. Thus, through the concepts of *networks* and *nodes*, the ‘working partnership relations’ between the various actors, organisations and agencies in the provision of security may be conceptualised.

Imagining nodes as sites of action within these ‘working relationships’, networks may be conceived as the apparatus which facilitates and supports partnerships between them. With the development of networks premised upon the exponential growth in information and communications, they possess the ability to traverse barriers which have until recently, limited partnerships between individual organisations and institutions (Dupont, 2004). Thus, within the specific context of networks of security governing,

‘security networks are formed around the authorisation and delivery of security through a range of processes and services that extend from the identification of needs and the resources available to respond to them, to the management of risks and the deployment of human and technological assets’ (Dupont, 2006a:168).

### **2.12.1 Networks in Security Governance**

At a basic level, it is contended that a significant shift in ‘thinking’ to a de-centred networked conception of security has occurred (Wood and Marks, 2006). In comparison to traditional, hierarchical and organisational ‘thinking’ around policing provision and how that may be linked in partnership, the underlying premise of networks is that ‘organisations use rules to coordinate, activity. Networks use relationships to influence behaviour and change minds’ (Gilchrist, 2004:34). Thus, Milward and Provan (2000) argue there is a need for increased co-operation and co-ordination using a networked approach as an effective means of joining stakeholders to deal with the multiple issues regarding crime and policing. With networks also suited to managing complex and fluctuating social contexts, they are able to accommodate divergence and dissent, as opposed to enforcing an organisational approach which imposes unified action on a spurious and ‘dictated’ consensus (Gilchrist, 2004).

On a more practical level, for networks to be effective within a security governance context, the provision of security is fundamental and constitutive of a sustained social or collective entity. This has been reinforced by Gilchrist (2004) who notes that networks can foster collective empowerment, develop community action and facilitate community cohesion around a common identity or theme. However, it is important to explore in more detail the literature in terms of the various aspects which promote the effectiveness of networks.

Firstly, it is recognised that the quality and density of (social) networks is vital to quality of life generally and indeed security governance (Elsdon *et al.*, 1998). Here, the density of a network is generally conceived to be the ratio of existing-to-possible connections between the various nodes of the network (Dupont, 2006b). Thus, with dialogue and relationships facilitating the connections while acting as the ‘intelligence’ in a network, information flows will be best when the various nodes are well connected in a ‘dense’ form (Gilchrist, 2004; Ensler and Xuejuan, 2007). As noted:

‘the institutional glue congealing networked ties may include...exchange relations and coalitions based on common interest, all within a single multiunit structure’ Raab and Milward, 2003:417).

Secondly, while networks may be considered neither random collections of nodes nor explicitly ordered, it is important that for ‘norms’ (in relation to security governance) to emerge, networks must be ‘closed’ to some extent (Gilchrist, 2004; Coleman, 1994). In this regard, it may be observed that

‘closed networks tend to form dense networks of like minded actors...Strong ties within homogeneous groups not only encourage conformity, but also lead to the circulation and re-circulation of similar ideas’ (Matsueda, 2006:17).

Within this ‘closed’ context, the ‘framing’ of crime and policing issues is also facilitated, as the process of constructing ‘reality’ in ways which may foster collective action within the network (ibid.). It is also apt to denote Ensler and Xuejuan’s (2007) ‘swarming theory’ with regard to networks. With no one ‘sting’ (or action) of a node in network necessarily effective, it is the collective nodal ‘swarm’ (or direction) of the network which can produce effective action. This has been further substantiated by Mead (1983) insofar as ‘when things get together, there arises something that cannot be stated in terms of the elements which go to make up the combination’ (cited in Gilchrist, 2004:90).

It is also important to be aware that networks are not necessarily the perfect conduit for managing crime and policing (or indeed any other quality of life issue). While networks involved in security governing may be able to efficiently exchange information and relations across boundaries, it may not always be for legitimate purposes or in line with wider community objectives. Raab and Milward (2000) have argued that ‘dark networks’ are an ever present problem. Indeed, networks that facilitate social action may be oriented to facilitate and promote illegitimate activity, or exclude the intrusions of the police as an auspice of security. Furthermore the space occupied by networks between ‘randomness’ and ‘orderliness’ may act as a barrier to regulation, especially where such network lacks ‘weak ties’ which may expose it to outside influence and scrutiny (Granovetter, 1983; Walklate, 2003).

It is also important to consider that networks only have limited capacity to: carry out specific activities; reach collective consensual decisions; or resolve internal disputes and conflicting interests which, it is argued, can also result in hidden pockets of power. Thus, the implications for networks within the context of security governance is that where they seek resources or desire to work with official state agencies (such as the police), the reality is that such co-operation demands the transference of governmental policing functions to what otherwise may be viewed as barely accountable community ‘partnerships’ (Loader, 2000). And unless such co-production of state and networked non-state security can be effectively managed, it renders

‘the question of how to hold non-police policing nodes accountable, and, more particularly, how to do so in a way that a unitary set of principles are applied across nodes...’ (Shearing, 2001a:267).

### 2.12.2 Nodes in Security Governance

The simplest way in which to conceptualise nodes within the security governance literature are as ‘sites of action’ (or groups/organisations) which promote or foster activities related to policing and crime (Shearing, 2001c). This may be further explained insofar as nodes may be viewed as locations of knowledge, capacity and resources that can authorise and facilitate activities relating to the governance of security (Shearing, 2004). Indeed, a more authoritative definition of a node within the security governance context is a site

‘with an outcome generating system where knowledge, capacity and resources are mobilised to manage a course of events... a node must have some institutional form, even if temporary. It need not be a formally constitute or legally recognised entity, but is must have sufficient stability and structure to enable the mobilisation of resources, mentalities and technologies over time’ (Burris *et al*, 2005:37-8).

In terms of defining nodes, within the more specific framework of a ‘networked’ security governance approach, it is important to adopt thinking within which the complexity of interlaced and overlapping sites of ‘order’ and activity may be considered (Kempa *et al.*, 1999). One of the key elements of a ‘networked nodal’ approach is a need to define nodes not just in terms of their role or activities in isolation, but also in terms of their relationships with other nodes. Beyond the local capacity, knowledge and authority which a node may possess, a ‘nodal networked’ approach goes beyond the mere mapping of nodes to consider the

‘subjective relational sphere of each node, that is the perception of its own position in a larger...field, of the other nodes’ roles, strengths and weaknesses, and of the resources it can mobilise to achieve certain objective derived from this reflective assessment’ (Dupont, 2006b:87).

In this sense, a nodal networked perspective dispenses with an over simplistic ‘boundaries’ conception of state and non-state policing authority (Johnston and Shearing, 2003) and attempts to circumvent the fact that

‘nodes and the rules and practices they have established tend to be judged to be legitimate or illegitimate in terms of the very Westphalian ideal that they are moving beyond’ (Kempa and Shearing, 2002:30).

As identified in the literature, one of the key advantages to adopting this networked nodal approach to security governance is that it enables ‘thinking’ which obviates pre-defined limits with regard to the alternative approaches of nodes in security provision (Burger, 1994). Such ‘limits’ have been argued to include those of geography and databases, as well as the definitions of nodal activity to outside the pre-packaged ‘vocabulary’ or regulation of the police. Thus, in adopting such an approach, the conceptual importance of nodal security governance becomes clear insofar as

‘first, it stresses that only by refusing to give conceptual priority to the state does it become possible to consider the range of...nodes that exist and the relationships between them. Second, by emphasising that the state is no longer a stable locus of government, the nodal approach defines governance as the property of networks rather than a product of any single centre of action. Third, as a relational model, this approach defines governance as the property of shifting alliances rather than a product of (state-led) ‘steering’ and ‘rowing’ strategies. Fourth, the approach affirms the obvious...that every form of governance is a product of human invention and reinvention and, as such, has normative implications’ (Johnston and Shearing, 2003:148).

The normative implications of this ‘human intervention’ approach to security governance may be further elaborated with reference to Castells (2000), who argues that nodes (as social structures) tend to be organised around relationships whose configurations themselves constitute ‘cultures’. Indeed, these ‘cultural relations’ are important as ‘human products’ of security governance insofar as they have the power to direct resources and capacities according to local contexts. From this perspective, it is possible to argue that by considering nodes as capable of commanding local and contextual power, non-state views on security governance are an important means of further deepening democracy (Shearing, 2006a).

Nodal conceptions of security governance are not, however, without their limitations. Jones (2007:859) contends that a nodal approach is based upon

‘rosy assumptions about local community cohesiveness and the existence of a shared moral code that can act as the basis for locally organised security provision’.



Thus, where resources are scarce or the capacities of nodes are in direct competition, it may lead to a fragmented vision of security governance premised upon ability to mobilise (popular) support rather than solve problems. In this regard, nodes which gather adequate support and appropriate capacities in excess of the competing nodes may themselves be described as networks in their own right (Dupont, 2006a).

But in overview of the nodal networked approach to security governance, the literature has evidenced a way of thinking which considers the capacities and strategies of nodes, while challenging entrenched beliefs on 'traditional' police primacy in security considerations (Wood and Marks, 2006). The nodal networked approach can therefore offer

'a common conceptual platform to interpret the complexification of security provision across a whole spectrum of configurations and can bridge the gap between state-centric and pluralist view of security...' (Dupont, 2004:87).

As argued by Loader and Walker (2001), the police as a 'site' of security remain closely tied to the peoples' sense of ontological security and collective identity. Though based in the fact that the police are still dependent upon the co-operation and consensus of communities generally (Shearing, 1996), the literature would suggest that citizens are closer to the aetiology of policing problems. In this regard, there is a clear need to consider a nodal networked approach to security governance to both understand *and* to harness local capacities, resources and organising.

## 2.13 The Nature of Security Governance in Northern Ireland

Having explored the literature on security governance with regard to context, devolved nature, networks and community determinants, the final area to examine is that of the ‘nature’ of security governance, or its broad delivery. As the ‘operational face’ to local security capacities and provision, this section will evidence the delivery of local security governing as bound up in a variety of factors, including: rationales; the tradition of ‘sorting things out’; and the alternative contexts to non-state provision of security.

As reflected in the study of Acheson *et al.* (2004), with myriad voluntary and community sector groups in the country undertaking a variety of roles within differing contexts and across social and cultural boundaries, their social ‘presence’ is undeniable ‘fact’ (NICVA, 2005; CJINI, 2006a). However, it must be noted that the ‘extent and nature of community action is neither self-evident nor securely defined within clear boundaries (Acheson *et al.*, 2006:19). Therefore, it is within this rather nebulous context of civil society organising and action that the literature shall focus, providing a framework in which to conceptualise the governance of security and its delivery.

At a basic level, the substantial ‘reservoir’ of non-state ‘policing’ in Northern Ireland developed from the Troubles, which may be viewed to have

‘brought many self-help agencies, interconnected with the paramilitaries...The tradition of ‘sorting things ‘out’ is one of the main strengths of Northern Ireland’s civil institutions’ (Brogden, 1998:4).

As further noted by Shearing (a former Patten Commissioner), such ‘policing nodes’ are a fact of life in the country (Shearing, 2000b). As he recently observed:

‘here in Northern Ireland – and in many other unsettled political contexts – another form of ‘non-state’ agent is particularly important in challenging the monopoly over the business of policing of the public police: civic bodies of various forms, including, but certainly not limited to, agencies that deploy violence as part of their practices of control...’ (Kempa and Shearing, 2005:7).

Within this non-state policing context, the literature indicates that such ‘alternative’ security governance ranges from: providing responses to interface violence (Jarman, 2002; 2006); community-based restorative justice initiatives (CJINI, 2007b; Mika, 2006); citizen patrols coordinating hundreds of volunteers; youth intervention services; and the coordination of multi-agency community safety forums, generally *outside* the remit of the state. Indeed, these advanced community networks can link and bridge across the divided communities and also provide both short and long-term solutions to the perceived and actual deficiencies in state-based provision of security (c.f. Topping, 2008b). Brewer (2001) has also indicated that as part of the process of democratic transition in the country, there has been minimal erosion of the local ‘moral’ economies, ‘grapevine’ networks and social organising derived from the Troubles to maintain social order and control (Moran, 2004). It is therefore to specific issues of engagement between the state/police and civil society capacities to which the literature shall now focus, in order to provide a contemporary perspective on the ‘place’ of security governing.

In conflicted democracies and transitional states where policing institutions are often perceived to be as much part of societal problems as solutions, the complex arrangements of civil society organising around security governing (through being in constant tension with the state) are often characterised by innovation and ‘alternative’ solutions in the delivery of ‘policing’ (Perry *et al.*, 1976; Anheiser and Kendall, 2002; Dupont, 2004). To some extent, this was an implicitly recognised and considered in the Patten Report through Recommendation 32, which stated that:

‘District Councils should have the power to contribute an amount initially up to the equivalent of 3p in the pound towards the improved police of the district, which could enable the District Policing Partnership Board to purchase additional services from the policing or other statutory agencies, or from the private sector’ (Patten, 1999:para 6.33).

Unfortunately, under a barrage of (unfounded political) criticism that such a community-level provision would provide an ‘open-door’ for paramilitary entry into publicly funded security governance arrangements, Recommendation 32 was the only provision in Patten never to have been enacted in legislative form (Mulcahy, 2006; Bayley, 2007). Indeed, such ‘dampening’ of the potential civil involvement in

‘policing’ was also foreshadowed by the parallel Review of the Criminal Justice System in 2000 insofar as the prospect for a ‘fascinating experiment’ in bringing together community initiatives and the attendant community energy, was a vision which the 2000 Review apparently had little time for (Gormally, 2004; McEvoy *et al.*, 2002). Thus, the opportunity for bridging the gap between private commercial policing and non-commercial community-based security governance as a form of ‘commercial community policing’ was lost (Roche, 2002).

What is also clear from the literature on the of delivery of community-based security governance is that such restrictive attitudes within government policy circles are ‘reflective of a mindset which *fears* genuine community involvement and ownership in the process of justice, particularly when communities may be ones traditionally alienated from the state structures’ (McEvoy *et al.*, 2002:197). A prime example regarding such reluctance for effective development of local security governance initiatives may be evidenced through Shirlow *et al.* (2005) in their work with former political prisoners. With one community group in North Belfast refused funding to provide a mediation service for paramilitary intimidation (in spite of established links with paramilitaries), the money was instead given to a Christian group because it was considered ‘safe’. This was despite the fact that giving the money to such a group was a *de facto* waste because it had no affective links or ties with the paramilitaries to be of practical use within the community. Even in 2008, application forms for community group funding from the Community Safety Unit (CSU) of the Belfast City Council have ‘no restorative justice groups need apply’ printed on them. Clearly for some within Government policy circles, engaging those with *perceived* ties to paramilitarism or ‘parallel’ state agendas is the step too far, no matter what the *reality* of their contribution to ‘policing’ could be.

There has, however, been some development with regard the governance of security in Northern Ireland in terms of the Loyalist-based ‘Alternatives’ restorative justice schemes; and the Republican-based Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI). Under the weight of pressure from such groups and their popularity at the community level, the NIO produced a protocol for restorative justice schemes which has resulted in ‘official’ accreditation for both schemes. Indeed, Alternatives and

CRJI were both given official NIO accreditation in 2008 following inspection by CJINI (CJINI 2007a; 2007b; 2008). But crucially, the prevalent ‘mindset’ (as already evidenced) is tucked away within the final pages of the inspection report. On page 18, it is states that ‘core funding should not necessarily come from the criminal justice system...we would suggest that their core funding...should come from the Department for Social Development...’ (CJINI, 2007b:18). Thus, it is clear that attitudes to local security governing in Northern Ireland, in light of current Government policy, are about the *managing* the aspirations of those who could contribute to policing and the criminal justice system, rather than genuinely *harnessing* their social utility or community capacities as part of Patten’s broader policing vision. This ‘mindset’ so ignores what O’Mahony *et al.* (2000:1) have called ‘chances’ to harness community security capacities in the post-ceasefire democratic space – obviating the contention that policing ‘issues...being addressed anew, paradoxically present opportunities for fresh and innovative approaches to basic issues that elsewhere are frozen in politicised or technocratic debates on crime...’

Finally, beyond some of the more pragmatic arguments within the literature relating to security governing and its delivery in Northern Ireland, it is also important to survey the literature in regard to the ‘makeup’ of those communities which contribute (or could potentially contribute) to the security governance debate. Outside of the (still) highly divided and segregated nature of Northern Irish society (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006), the apparently ‘vibrant’ nature of the voluntary and community is evidently an extension of the communal division in which it is situated. As highlighted in the study by Acheson *et al.* (2006), 73.9% of such voluntary and community groups in Northern Ireland derive mainly or wholly from one of the two main communities – either Catholic or Protestant. This undoubtedly reflects the contention by Morrow, that the Province is characterised by bonding (insular) over bridging (linking) capital (Morrow, 2006). At a more detailed level, the Catholic community is generally characterised by activism *against*, or in parallel to the state, underpinning their heightened collectivist attitudes in comparison to the Protestant sentiment (Acheson *et al.*, 2004; Cairns *et al.*, 2003).

Turning to community organising within the Protestant community, its *raison d'être* has arguably been 'clouded' in light of recent political developments, whereby 'in losing its sense of preferment, the Protestant community has...found it difficult to achieve a viable focus around which community activism might purposefully coalesce' (Acheson *et al.*, 2004:39).

This may account for the fact that the Protestant community tends to be characterised by higher levels of bridging (linking) capital than the Catholic community as a necessary prerequisite of sustaining their activities (OFMDFM, 2006).

Though beyond this basic understanding of differences between community organising within Protestant and Catholic communities, there are implications for the long term delivery of security governance in the country. In view of the *unitary* nature of the Northern Ireland criminal justice system, the PSNI, and indeed the funding streams for community organisations, the divided nature of community-based activism around 'policing' and security governance will only serve to sustain pockets of micro-governance within the specific social and cultural contexts of Protestant and Catholic communities respectively. And until there can be a more unified approach to community-based security governance, real and tangible benefits for local communities to deal with crime and quality of life issues will continue to be limited. Because neither interested communities, government bodies nor PSNI will be able to pour their finite resources into communities (and their organisations) whose activities are premised upon sectarian division and provide duplicate services on common security needs within Northern Ireland.

## 2.14 Summary of Governance of Security Literature

One of the key issues to emerge from the security governance literature is the need for a re-examination of what constitutes ‘thinking’ in regard to policing and security. While the community policing literature provides a more narrow, police-centric definition of policing and security, the governance of security literature allows for a broader, relational approach. In this regard, policing is perceived as a product of power, relations and collective capacities and not merely a ‘task’ to be carried out, measured and recorded. Thus, considerations around the governance of security relate more closely to the necessary place of non-state policing provision at the community level rather than its ‘imagined’ place from limited state and institutional perspectives.

Furthermore, in accounting for the governance of security as a means of dealing with crime and (in) security, the literature posits an interpretative, contextual approach to inform not just the *type* of broad policing action, but the *basis* for that action. And as part of that basis, the literature denotes a need to consider some of the social and cultural factors which both facilitate and promote non-state policing activities. It is only through using this approach that broader, democratic consideration may be afforded to all those non-state providers with a stake in the promotion of safer communities at the local level.

It is also notable that security governance theory facilitates an understanding of the organisation of non-state bodies and groups around policing and security matters. On the one hand, the literature provides the conceptual lens through which to understand how such organising takes place in and of itself. On the other hand, it considers an organisational framework through which security governance activity may be channelled and managed. Thus, within the unique context of Northern Ireland’s security ‘otherness’, the literature provides the basis for a systematic means of identifying and analysing the vast array of non-state activity and organising which broadly contributes to policing at the community level.

## **3.0 Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, it will begin by addressing the methodological issues associated with researching both the PSNI and community-based organisations within the specific context of Northern Ireland. Secondly, the chapter will examine the broader theoretical issues of the research, while justifying the methodology in relation to the subtle complexities of such ‘sensitive’ research (Brewer, 1990). With regard to the themes and issues associated with the community policing and security governance literature, this chapter will identify and develop a research methodology which appreciates the limitations and constraints associated with such an investigation. The chapter will conclude by highlighting the practical realities which characterised both the police and community-based research.



### 3.2 ‘Doing’ Police Research

A useful starting point with regard to researching police organisations generally has been captured by Bayley (1994:17), who notes that ‘access to any country’s police is problematic because their work is often...politically sensitive...Few countries fail to raise barriers of some sort’. Within the more specific context of Northern Ireland, Brewer’s (1990) study of the former RUC highlighted that policing occurs in a ‘sensitive’ and ‘emotive’ environment – which ultimately has implications for both the researcher, research design, location, validity and reliability.

Looking in more detail at prior police research in Northern Ireland, the literature would further suggest difficulties which emanate from both the police as an organisation *and* the conduct of the researchers themselves. In reference to the former, a number of issues have plagued police attitudes to independent, external research, which in turn has implications for the researcher at the practical level. As indicated by Mulcahy (2000:72), ‘throughout the conflict the RUC has sought to control the information available to researcher...’. Thus, in regard to police suspicion towards ‘outsiders’ generally (Brewer, 1990; McLoughlin and Miller, 2006), the highly politicised nature of the police role in Northern Ireland has further amplified this problem – to the extent that police assume that hidden agendas must ‘lurk beneath facades of academic objectivity’ (Mulcahy, 2000:72). In this regard, while much has been written in relation to policing in the country, little *empirical* research undertaken with either the police organisation or the policing institutions (Bayley, 2007).

Though beyond the dynamics of such general research concerns, there lies a more subtle tale for the researcher within the policing literature. Most notably, it has been described that as part of research with the former RUC:

‘In a number of...instances...I was made aware that my religion (Protestant) had played a crucial deterministic effect on whether the RUC officers would agree to be interviewed or not. Indeed, a number of respondents either made the point directly (or else implied) that had I been a Catholic they would not have participated in the study at all’ (Ellison, 1997:105).

While such issues may be hard to quantify or substantiate, or even have any relevance to PSNI, it must be noted that such difficulties resonate with wider ethno-religious issues attached to sensitive and potentially ‘political’ research.

Almost 20 years ago, a Queen’s University academic/barrister was murdered by the IRA because he was considered part of the British state counterinsurgency apparatus (Sluka, 1990). While this example may appear extreme, it is not a problem that may be consigned to the ‘dustbin’ of history as part of the conflict, even within Northern Ireland’s post-conflict peace. With dissident republicans having issued death threats against Sinn Fein members because of their affiliation with District Policing Partnerships; the recent and ongoing terrorist attacks by dissident Republicans against the PSNI, described as the highest for many years (Belfast Telegraph, 2007b; 2008a-d); and the death threats issued to Republican community workers co-operating with PSNI, the ‘emotive’ issue of policing is still by no means a benign subject for prospective researcher (*Irish News*, 2008a).

Even during the fieldwork, a Republican who worked for a community organisation (and by their own admission were involved in paramilitarism during the conflict) indicated they were under as much threat from dissident Republicans as the PSNI because of their new working relationships following Sinn Fein’s acceptance of the policing institutions in January 2007. Thus, with religion, perceived identity and political affiliation inextricably linked with policing, striving towards some degree of neutrality and objectivity is vital for both research credibility and personal safety alike.

McLoughlin and Miller (2006) have indicated that because Northern Ireland is still intensely politicised, ‘neutrality’ to an ‘outsider’ is infinitely more difficult than would normally be associated with qualitative research. From the researcher’s use of nomenclature, to the pronunciation of vowels, educational background to sporting interests (Knox, 2001), ‘neutrality’ in its true sense is an impossible task, at least for a ‘native’ researcher from Northern Ireland. To this extent, with researcher identity also important to the research subject (Jenkins, 1984):

‘often when researchers proclaim their neutrality, they are in fact concealing their own sympathies. By doing so, they deceive at least some of those in the setting. A number of writers have argued that deception of this kind is permissible, indeed, laudable, in highly stratified, repressive or unequal contexts’ (Lee, 1995:23).

In this respect, the author was able to employ a ‘strategy’ in the course of the fieldwork to circumvent the difficulties of absolute neutrality, while remaining within the parameters of ‘permissible deception’ (Bryman, 2004). To gain both credibility and improve personal safety (especially with regard to community-based research), the author was fortunate to be able to draw upon and utilise social, cultural, political and geographical ‘cues’ learned from having lived in the predominantly Protestant area of East Belfast, and the predominantly Catholic community of West Belfast in which the research was being conducted. While such a technique was of negligible use in the police phase of the research, it undoubtedly ‘eased’ the author into the community settings in which the research was conducted. While undoubtedly a risky strategy in terms of the ‘cover’ of such a permissible deception being ‘blown’, this methodological technique helped to create instant, tangible rapport within the respective community respondents. Transforming the author from a ‘suspect other’ to ‘one of theirs’, it further developed trust in the researcher, helping to increase the volume and sensitivity of information imparted, otherwise (severely) limited to an ‘outsider’. And importantly, it allowed the researcher to work with the ‘cultural grain’ of the particular sample areas and obviate the potential for awkward cultural and politically sensitive clashes, reducing the chances of conflict (and improving researcher safety).

In terms of ‘doing’ police research in Northern Ireland, it is now important to turn to the issue of researcher conduct. At a simplistic level, police research may be conceived as a tool for ‘looking beyond’ academic theorising and into the practical world of police realities (Birzer, 2002). Though as noted by Mulcahy (2000), the traditional control of information by the police to academics in Northern Ireland may be conceived as part of wider, ‘official’ concern about the (potential) effect of research on public understandings of the police. Such organisational concerns, from the police perspective, may be valid insofar as

‘anyone planning research...first has to confront the major contextual problem that the research will end up in the public, not just the academic, domain’ (Brewer, 1990:580).

As part of the author’s own PhD research, an initial ‘gatekeeper’ consultation meeting was conducted with a Chief Inspector at the Garnerville Training College in East Belfast (24/5/2007). Indeed, significant amounts of time were devoted to conversations about PSNI editorial control and what precisely I would ‘do’ with the research data. As was stated by the Chief Inspector, he did not want to ‘get his fingers burnt’, because it ‘was his neck on the line’ should he so authorise my research and it ‘went tits up’.

However, the practical lessons for researcher ‘behaviour’ from this example are therefore clear. Firstly, any research conducted must be done so with a view to safeguarding personal and other researcher’s access to the police for the future (Marks, 2004). Indeed, the selfish pursuit of sensationalist, one-off pieces of police research does nothing to bolster what is generally limited police and academic co-operation (Birzer, 2002). Secondly, researching the police is also about ‘fair research’ insofar as the research should aim to give something of value back to the organisation (Greenhill, 1981). This was a significant point made by the Chief Inspector in the pilot consultation where the author was tersely reminded he was the ‘seventeenth person this year to come to us looking to do research’, and ‘of what benefit would it be to the PSNI?’. In this regard, it is important ‘frame...proposed research in terms of managerial questions, not sociological ones’ in an attempt to counter such obstacles (Van Maanen, 1978 cited in Ellison, 1997:97).

In overview of ‘doing’ police research in Northern Ireland, it has been argued that

‘a scholar who studies the police must be willing to do extensive fieldwork in unprepossessing surroundings, to brave bureaucratic intransigence, and to become politically suspect and socially *de classe*’ (Bayley, 1994:7).

Though as further noted by Bayley, in spite of such difficulties, it is important to remember that the level of access afforded to researchers may be used as an indicator to, and be reflective of the openness of, political life and character of the society in

which the police operate – a point which has great resonance within the context of Northern Ireland.

### 3.3 ‘Measuring’ the Concept of Community Policing

When considering research on ‘community policing’, in contrast to the complex and varied literature and practice which characterises this policing style, it is argued that ‘we need measures that move beyond the dysfunctional eclecticism that has long characterised community policing’ (Fielding and Innes, 2006:129). Indeed, with the implementation and delivery of community policing contingent upon a wide range of influences, not limited to individual force policy; individual officer attitudes; community interaction with police; levels of crime; and demography (Renauer, 2007), there is no singular, overarching ‘measure’ of how community policing could or should be done within any given context. A further problem is the difficulty in documenting what officers are doing, or if what they are doing is effective – especially in view of community policing’s proactive and preventative orientation (Skogan, 2006b).

In reference to Fielding, he contends that community policing ‘consists of every element of the social world...everything in the social world has something to do with the success or otherwise of community policing’ (2002:154). Therefore, with community policing inextricably linked to wider social and organisational factors, ‘to examine the police in isolation reveals little about how the police...operates and *why* this new form of policing has come to the forefront...’ (Oliver and Bartgis, 1998:497 emphasis added).

Here, a ‘relational’ approach to community policing research should be applied for two reasons: firstly, exploring community policing within, and in relation to wider social factors (the ‘field’ of the community) will help to inform the research in terms of

‘the historical relations between certain social groups and the police, anchored in legal processes and discretion that police are authorised to exercise and the distribution of power and material resources within a community’ (Chan, 1997:71).

Secondly, a relational approach also informs understanding of the police ‘habitus’ (or cultural knowledge) which the police instinctively integrate with their experience to in the delivery of policing (ibid.). From this perspective, research can then be

considered outside the limited utility (yet stoical use) of statistics and measures, and in line with the fact that

‘everything the patrol officer does is “enculturated” – that is, attuned to, working with and creating understandings inflected by experience, constructive interpretation of constrained information and relevance criteria laid down by current understandings of the police mission in that locale. Everything done in this mode is consistent with qualitative research. It is what a competent officer does all day long. The objective must be to get some of that perceptiveness...into our measures...’ (Fielding and Innes, 2006:139).

Therefore, in order to provide some workable parameters to the seemingly limitless potential of the research process, a broad thematic analysis of community policing as undertaken by the PSNI (and as the core to policing under Patten Recommendation 44) will be employed. Using the five principles of: accountability; empowerment; partnership; problem solving; and service delivery, set out by the PSNI in 2002 as their own guiding policing for the implementation and delivery of community policing, this provides a robust and unique framework through which to interpret what is the core to policing in Northern Ireland from an officer perspective, while set against contemporary debate, theory and practice (PSNI, 2002a). It must be noted that the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI, 2009) have also undertaken a thematic inspection of community policing, or Policing with the Community (PwC). Indeed, they too have adopted (in part) this thematic analysis approach set against the five principles laid down by the PSNI, while paying regard to the qualitatively-based assessments of PwC offered by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary ‘Baseline Assessment’ of the PSNI in 2006 (HMIC, 2007).

Even the NIPB has left the assessment of PwC as a vague policy aspiration. As noted in their 2007-2010 Policing Plan, ‘measurement’ will be through ‘implementation of the PwC strategy by establishing the neighbourhood policing model in all Districts’ (NIPB and PSNI, 2007:17). Interestingly, this is judged by the target that the PSNI are to ‘demonstrate the extent to which the neighbourhood policing model has been implemented’ (ibid.), which has been updated through the ‘Neighbourhood Policing Progress Monitoring Framework’ (NIPB and PSNI, 2008:21). Again, this monitoring framework is set at a relatively nebulous policy

level for which the PSNI are themselves the assessors and critics of their own progress. Although in overview of both the HMIC and NIPB methodologies for 'assessing' community policing as undertaken by the PSNI, the thematic analysis adopted here will provide a robust, 'bottom up' approach from the officers' perspective grounded in current policing research and philosophy.

Such arguments with regard to community policing research are further strengthened in reference to Trojanowicz (1994:260), who notes that officers involved in community policing have three key characteristics: an intimate knowledge of the community in which they work; a pre-established bond of trust with the people in the community; and a broad range of options to 'police' a community, from a 'well done' to the use of force. Thus, such 'thinking' on community policing research outside of claims merely to have implemented it (and the limitations of statistical measurement on crime reduction) will further help to inform understanding of community policing as delivered within the specific context of the sample areas (Wilson, 2005; Ferret, 2004).



### 3.4 Developing a Research Design for Community Policing

Within the context of policing generally, there are a myriad of considerations which must be taken into account when designing research. What should be foremost in the mind of researcher is a clear recognition of the limitations insofar as

‘researchers do not, and could not, demand access to all settings, insist on interviewing anyone whom they desire to interview, or require the divulging of relevant information...sanctions against those who refuse to comply are not usually available...’ (Hammersley, 1995 cited in Campbell, 2003:299).

In reference to this ‘lesson’ on the development of a police-based research design, it is therefore useful to consider starting from the ‘edge’ of the research limitations and work inwards to minimise potential losses of information, compliance with subjects and access to data.

An initial starting point with most police research is organisational ‘gatekeeper(s)’. Indeed, gatekeepers can play a pivotal role in any project. On one hand, the role of the gatekeeper is to assess the objectivity, impact and potential consequences of any proposed research. Thus, it is essential to frame research in ‘neutral’ terms, avoiding themes and issues which the police hierarchy may view as sensitive or controversial (Ellison, 1997). On the other hand, gatekeepers may also adopt a cost-benefit analysis before committing organisational resources and time to the research (cf. Ashby *et al.*, 2007). As succinctly stated by the officer in the pilot consultation for this research, ‘you don’t get something for nothing’.

Unfortunately, gatekeeper access is only the beginning of the research process in regard to the fact that the

‘reliability of the data depends on what control the gatekeeper demands, something...called ‘retrenchment from the front’, and the integrity of the researcher in understanding such pressure’ (Brewer, 1990:582).

Even where access to desired subjects is relatively unfettered, it must be remembered that gatekeeper access to police officers can have subtle effect – the intentions of the

higher ranks through the research, which may be signalled to those lower down at the sub-official level (Ellison, 1997). With regular officers too acting as ‘subsidiary gatekeepers’, they may also object to ‘outsiders’ taking notes and questioning their routines. Indeed, refusing to speak to the researcher or conspiring with fellow officers to demonstrate only the ‘official’ version of police activity is not uncommon (Brewer, 1990; Lau, 2004; McLoughlin and Miller, 2006; Marks, 2004).

Although a more practical way in which to limit the loss of information or compliance, and to reduce suspicion of the researcher as an ‘outsider’ is to try and ‘snowball credibility’ (Knox, 2001). Here, the ability of the researcher to have already gathered key interviews and contacts ‘under the belt’ before reaching the police organisation can both enhance the credibility of the researcher at the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ gatekeeper levels while reducing suspicions as to ulterior research motives. Though in overview of developing a research design with regard to the police, it is important that at all stages, from gatekeeper negotiations through to alternative and credible stakeholders in policing, the parameters of the research limitations (as well as possible ways around those limitations) are always carefully considered.

### 3.5 Issues of Security Governance Research

When researching the concept of security governance, or more simply, the organising of individuals into groups in order to manage crime and social control issues, it is interesting to note that such organising is ‘infinitely richer and more varied than we have cared to assume, and a far more convincing and encouraging mirror of what...communities are about’ (Elsdon *et al.*, 1998:10). Indeed, such organising may be characterised by a range of self-help, advice or service provision groups, managed either formally or informally on a small or large scale. Though in considering how such activity may be researched, a number of issues must be taken into account within the context of Northern Ireland.

In a similar vein to that of police research, communities too have their natural gatekeepers – those positioned within communities and their organisations who may, or may not accede to external research. In this regard, Knox (2001) has indicated that for the practical purposes of research in the community, there are only a limited number of such gatekeepers. This is made more problematic by the fact

‘suspicion of ‘outsiders’ is intense for this type of research in Northern Ireland, with the perceived religion of the researcher likely to be a key factor in the minds of interviewees. Indeed, such gatekeepers will look for ‘clues’ to religious affiliation, which has become intrinsic to everyday social interaction in Northern Ireland’ (ibid:218).

Therefore, researchers working within the community context in Northern Ireland may rightly have concerns, especially when working on and across both sides of the political divide (Sluka, 1995).

As already noted, threats to personal safety cannot be dismissed, especially when research centres upon the sensitive issues of crime and policing (McLoughlin and Miller, 2006; Sluka, 1990). Undoubtedly, this potential threat is linked to the fact that many community-based groups have the potential to be (and in many cases may be) perceived as comprised of members affiliated to paramilitaries. Though whatever the arguments postulated about working with such groups and individuals, it must be remembered that as active members of the community, they bring both credibility and respect to the work of the groups in given communities, as well as a

social value in regard to post-conflict development and community issues (McKeever, 2007).

On a more practical level, it must be noted that there is virtually no research with regard to identifying, mapping and analysing community-based groups who have an 'interest' in crime or policing issues in Northern Ireland (NICVA, 2005). Thus, it makes the research in identifying relevant groups more difficult than might otherwise be the case with, for example, housing or health issues. This is further compounded by the fact that it is often those groups with the loudest 'voice' and who are deemed politically acceptable to funding bodies who are best placed to compete for resources and make themselves 'visible' (Acheson *et al.*, 2006; McCall and Williamson, 2001; CJINI, 2006a).

### **3.6 Developing a Research Design for the Governance of Security**

When considering a research design for the governance of security, the starting point must consider with what ‘type’ of groups or collections of individuals is to be researched. At a general level, the term ‘community-based organisations’ may be conceived as the standard umbrella term used to encompass community-based groups, which, either formally or informally engage in activity which in some way contributes to broad policing and criminogenic issues within the sample area.

It is further important to note that a group’s activities, skills, or ‘client’ base may neither be temporally nor spatially fixed. Indeed, advocacy, counselling, referrals, lobbying, community mobilisation, mediation and street patrols may all relate in some way to the governance of security (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993; Acheson *et al.*, 2006). Again, a broad approach is necessary with respect to identifying such groups.

Another consideration in developing a research design relates to the area in which groups are situated. As succinctly captured, it is important to describe communities in thorough detail insofar as ‘it is important to capture all the dimensions of a community - not just voluntary organisations - to fully understand the unique context’ (Salamon, 2007:151).

Within the specific context of Northern Ireland, the construction of physical boundaries is an undoubted advantage with regard to the spatial distribution of community groups generally (Marshall, 1997). Indeed, there are approximately 5000 such groups within the province (NICVA, 2005; CJINI, 2006a). Thus, according to NICVA, one third of those groups lie within the Greater Belfast area (approximately 1700), with one quarter lying within the four smaller local government district areas of Belfast (LGD) (approximately 1250) (Acheson *et al.* (2004). In reference to the Belfast LGD, they divided into four relatively even parliamentary constituencies (PC) of North, South, East and West (data available at [www.ninis.gov.uk](http://www.ninis.gov.uk)).

At this point, it is important to briefly highlight some of the demographic features of Belfast's four PC areas in regard to considering a research design. Turning firstly to North and South Belfast, these are heavily populated *heterogeneous* areas, with the South characterised by a diverse and transient populations, and the North of the city divided by interface communities (cf. Jarman, 2002; Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). However, it is to East and West Belfast that attention shall now turn in order to highlight, and justify their consideration within the research design.

Firstly, with the populations of the East and West Belfast PC areas standing at approximately 80,000 and 87,000 respectively, they are both of similar size and fall within the practical population limits outlined by Marshall (1997). Secondly, the two areas are largely *homogeneous* in terms of their religious composition, with East Belfast at 84.6% Protestant, and West Belfast at 82.7% Catholic. And importantly for situating the research on security governance,

‘East and West Belfast are different...Unlike the North and South of the city, the East and West are relatively homogenous in terms of their religious composition. For precisely this reason, however, they have become political bastions for their respective communities...’ (McLoughlin and Miller, 2006:no p.n.).

Therefore, policing issues, along with security governance activity undertaken at the community level will arguably have a resonance with the wider community in Northern Ireland, although this may be limited to urban rather than the more rural and isolated areas of the country, often sheltered from the more damaging effects of the conflict (Topping, 2008b). On the one hand, situating the security governance research in East and West Belfast is justified on practical and demographic grounds. On the other hand, East and West Belfast PCs represent security governance activity and organising between the divided communities in Northern Ireland (see Table 1 and Figure 1). This in turn will allow the research to both compare and contrast the diverging interests and rationalities which underpin such activity in and of itself, and in relation to policing (Acheson *et al.*, 2004).

However, it must be remembered that the sample areas of East and West Belfast are defined through the NINIS data as what might otherwise be described as

predominantly working-class areas. Thus, the transferability and applicability of the results to areas of rural and middle-class demographic composition may be limited. Furthermore, due to the recent nature of the conflict, the ‘representativeness’ of community bodies within the sample areas must be treated with caution. With the potential for former and current paramilitary members to be involved in civil society organising, the agendas and opinions of those involved in security governance activity must be observed from perspective which is more critical than might otherwise be used.

**Table 1: Overview of Demographic Data and Recorded Offences for Parliamentary Constituencies in Belfast and Northern Ireland\***

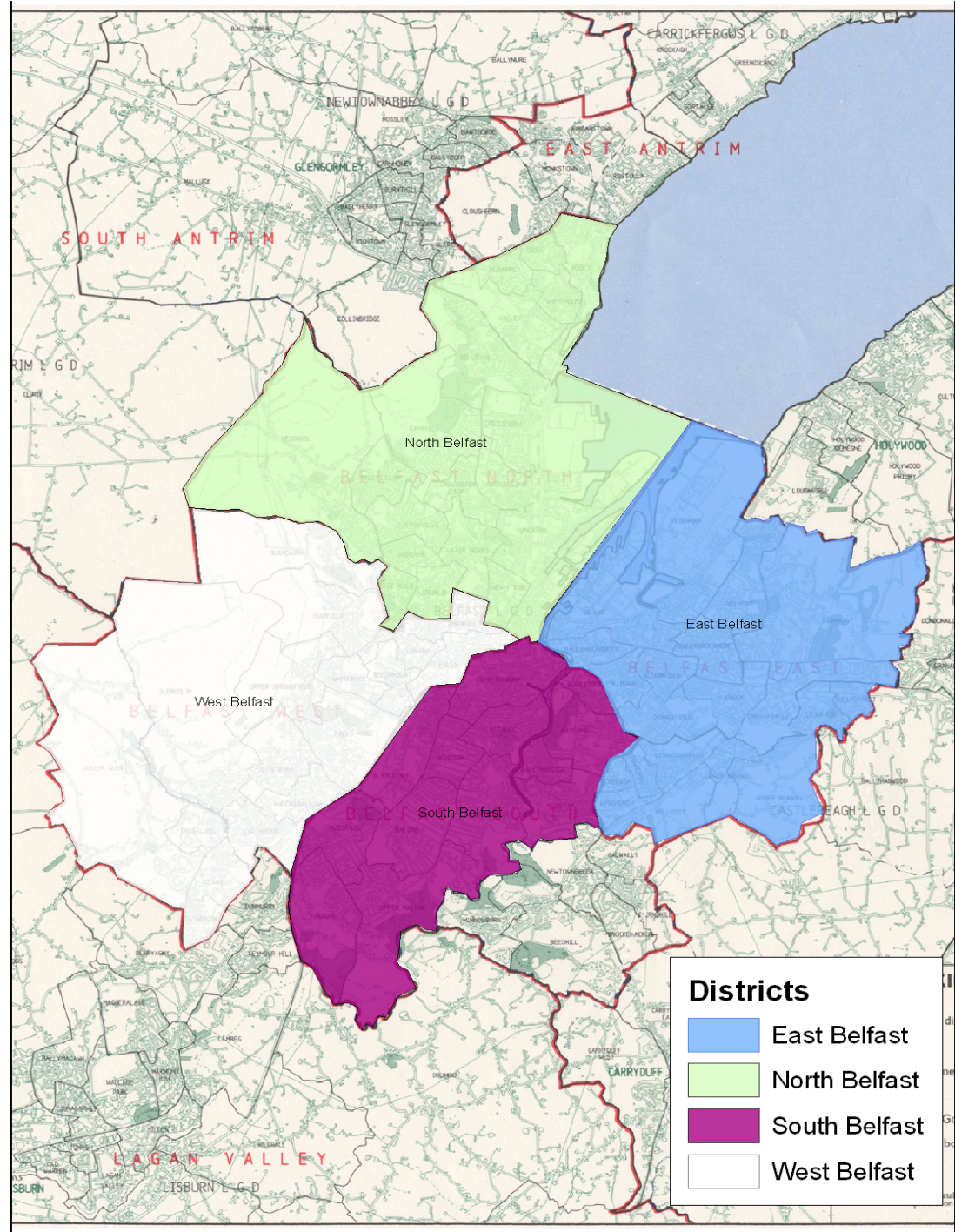
\* Figures are for 2007/8 obtained from [www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk](http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk)

	Population	Pop. Density	% Religious Composition		Total Recorded Offences
			Catholic	Protestant	
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	1,685,267	1.2	43.8	53.1	108,468
<b>North Belfast PC</b>	86,066	21.62	44.9	51.9	9419
<b>South Belfast PC</b>	94994	27.53	52	41.4	11,189
<b>East Belfast PC</b>	79,261	22.23	9.9	84.6	4851
<b>West Belfast PC</b>	87,610	21.22	82.7	16.2	9004



**Figure 1: Map of Belfast Parliamentary Constituencies\***

\*Crown Copyright 2009, taken from: [www.boundarycommission.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommission.org.uk)



### 3.6.1 Justifying the ‘Place’ of Research

While the methodology has touched upon the arguments which relate to the justification for choosing East and West Belfast on practical and demographic grounds, it is important to examine this justification in relation to the keys themes of the research i.e. community policing and the governance of security.

In relation to the research themes, the sample areas may be justified on two significant grounds. Firstly, as evident from the research with PSNI, East Belfast is considered to be a ‘model’ for community policing best practice for the entire service in terms of its implementation and the relations between the police and the community in the area. Thus, East Belfast is a key focus in terms of community policing in relation to *established* police-community interaction and the PSNI’s work with pre-existing community infrastructures. Secondly, and in contrast to East Belfast, it is apt to choose West Belfast because of the fact PSNI have never been able to deliver community policing (and policing more generally) in its normal sense – thus representing an area of *emerging* and *developing* police-community relations. Furthermore, the social structures which have sustained local security governing *outside* the remit of state policing throughout the conflict may laterally be considered as a model for ‘best practice’ in the security governance sense, notably because of the community’s broad ability to sustain ‘control’ of crime issues over the years (Brewer, 2001; Topping, 2008a).

But crucially, West Belfast is also a vital area for the research because of the fact it is a ‘bastion’ for Republicans and Nationalists in terms of the new political dispensation and Sinn Fein’s historic acceptance of the policing structures in the country (McLoughlin and Miller, 2006). As uncovered through the research, the tentative steps taken by a number of Republican and Nationalist groups in West Belfast to forge (new and groundbreaking) links with the PSNI were being used as a model of ‘best practice’ for similar groups in other areas of the country traditionally opposed to working with the police.

Thus, the significance for choosing such sample areas cannot be underestimated – not just in practical terms, but also in social, political and cultural terms for the delivery of community policing and the interaction of PSNI with the community and local structures governing security issues in what may be termed ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ areas.

### 3.7 Methodological Approach

In the context of the research design, it is important to consider one's methodological 'approach' in order to guide the practical data gathering for what is being researched. As abundantly clear from the literature and methodological considerations, both community policing and the governance of security research are subjects situated firmly within the 'social world'. In this respect, there are no single 'truths' or 'realities' which can be definitively captured, interpreted or explicated. McNeill and Chapman (2005) suggest to this extent that researchers must be careful to acknowledge that their interpretation of data may only be one of many. It is therefore important to adopt ways of thinking that adequately appreciate the complex and variegated issues of such 'social world' research.

A useful starting point when considering the methodological approach is through Max Weber's concept of 'Verstehen', or empathetic understanding as epistemological thinking for qualitative research (Bryman, 2004). Commensurate with such thinking is the concept of 'interpretivism', or simply an interpretative approach to the research insofar as 'interpretivists believe an understanding of the context in which any form of research is conducted is critical to the interpretation of data gathered' (Willis, 2007:98). In contrast to linear, positivistic approaches to social research, the value of interpretivism is further highlighted by Rubin and Rubin (2005:23) who denote that

'emulating physicists or biologists in their approach, positivist social researchers look for the uniform, precise rules that they claim organise social behaviour...Because positivists seek rules that apply uniformly, they extract simple relationships from a complex real world and examine them as if context did not matter and as if social life were stable...'

Indeed, Silverman (2006) argues that the real world is more complex than positivists would allow us to believe; with McCann (1996) noting that positivism has the effect of disaggregating the complex social world into discrete causal (and therefore artificial) connections.

Not only does interpretivism help avoid the potential for over-simplification of research to what can merely be observed, but it also provides a gateway for access

into what Geertz (1975) has termed 'thick descriptions'. Logically, as part of more generic inductive thinking associated with qualitative research, an interpretivist approach allows for the location of meanings and their accounts within wider webs of meaning, and therefore theorising (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006). Indeed, it is this crucial 'meaning' which the qualitative researcher needs to access in order to understand that

'beliefs and practices which are constitutive of one another. Practices could not exist if people did not have apt beliefs. Beliefs or meanings would not make sense without the practices to which they refer' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006:2).

One further advantage of adopting an interpretivist approach over that of a positivistic one is in its value for researching the police (premised in community policing) and community activity (premised in the governance of security). It is recognised that the positivistic measures of police statistics neither resonate with what the police actually do in a given community, nor adequately describe the community in which the police work (Maguire, 2007; Farrell and Pease, 2007a; 2007b). Thus, an interpretivist stance facilitates a detailed description of the police and their knowledge/practice based beliefs, the structural conditions in which they operate (the community) and the link between these two cultural 'arenas' of police and community (Chan, 1997; Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

### **3.8 Data Gathering and Choosing a Methodology**

Having explored the key themes and issues for the development of the community policing and security governance agendas, it is important to examine some of the relevant theoretical and practical considerations for conducting such work. It is clear from the literature that community policing is multifaceted and concerned with influences from not just the PSNI, but also the policing structures and communities. Looking to the governance of security, such activity is not conducted, organised or controlled by one particular group or individuals with uniform characteristics or agendas. Rather, security governing is about the myriad activities undertaken across a range of social contexts, at different times and in response to different circumstances. Thus, a methodology must be chosen that will capture the social context in which community policing and security governance are situated, yet be adaptable enough to be applied consistently across police and community-based groups (Hall and Hall, 1996).

### 3.8.1 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research

When considering a methodology for the research, a useful starting point is in regard to the appropriateness of qualitative or quantitative approaches. Indeed, when considering the social context in which community policing and security governance take place, it is interesting to note that

‘both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with the individuals’ point of view. However, qualitative investigations...can get closer to the actors’ perspective through detailed interviewing...They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture their subject’s perspective because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 cited in Silverman, 2004:342).

Indeed, qualitative research has a further advantage insofar as it captures the conditions and situations in which activity is, or is not undertaken. Thus, while qualitative research may not be able to provide scientific reflections *of* the social world, it does allow access *into* the social world and context which shape and guide experiences (Miller and Glassner, 2004).

At this point, it is apt to note neither policing nor security governance activity is a fixed or static phenomenon. Police activity, and especially community policing is premised and guided by local conditions. Similarly, security governance activity is premised upon responding to issues within a local context. ‘Action’ in this sense is ‘social’ insofar as it is guided by, and takes account of the actions of others (Hall and Hall, 1996). Therefore, a qualitative approach will be adopted because such ‘social’ aspects of ‘action’ cannot adequately be represented where they are bound by rigid, pre-specified methods and the detailed hypothesis of quantitative work (Willis, 2007). Thus, situations and settings in which people have shared interests and meanings in common matters, such as policing, security governance and crime, cannot be adequately characterised by the quantitative, discrete logic of ‘fact finding’ which becomes refracted and blurred through our ‘webs of significance’, unique to each and every social context and interaction (Geertz, 1975; Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

### 3.8.2 Choosing the Methodology

Having identified the value of qualitative research for work in hand, it is now important to consider an appropriate research method. Though throughout this section, it must be remembered that it is necessary to choose a methodology which allows for both consistency and reliability within and between the various groups and organisations who have a stake in policing and security governance.

Some of the classic studies of policing generally have been conducted using (at least in part) an ethnographic approach (Campbell, 2003; Brewer and Magee, 1991; Adams, 2000; Cicourel, 1976). However, there are a number of practical problems in adopting such a methodology within the overarching aims and objectives of the PhD. Firstly, ethnographic research is very time consuming, with Brewer and Magee's (1991) experience of the RUC highlighting the lengthy 'lag period' between starting the ethnography and being accepted by the officers as part of 'their world'. Secondly, negotiating access with the PSNI for an ethnographic study of officers would be incredibly difficult, especially in light of previous research attempts (including those by the author) to gain access for straight-forward interviews; and the practical length of time required to conduct ethnographic research across two separate sample areas (Ellison, 1997).

The next logical consideration for a qualitative research method is that of the interview. It is important to understand that interviews are in two main forms: either structured, semi-structured or unstructured formats. In reference to the former, they have been criticised by interpretivists because of the closed nature of the questions, rigid structure and pre-coded answers, which McNeill and Chapman (2005:57) argue devalues the

'experience of the respondent because it is effectively saying that unless the respondent has had an experience similar to the one mentioned in the interview schedule, the sociologist is not interested in them'.

Though in reference to the latter, McNeill and Chapman (2005:58) note they have a distinct advantage for eliciting qualitative data insofar as they do not impose pre-set questions and replies, while providing an opportunity for the respondent 'to say what they want rather than what the interviewer might expect'. And while semi-structured



interviews (SSIs) present their own difficulties in terms of analysing the vast quantities of data they produce, it is to semi-structured interviews that this section shall now turn in order to assess both the utility and practicality for researching community policing and the governance of security.

### **3.8.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

At a basic level, Kiely and Peek (2002) have contended that not only are semi-structured interviews rich sources of ethnographic data in themselves, but they also evidence

‘patterns of basic assumptions – invented, discovered or developed by a given group...that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to...members in the correct way to perceive, think and feel...’ (Schein, 1985 cited in Kiely and Peek, 2002:170).

This is ultimately important to understand both the work of the police through community policing, and the work of community-based organisations through the governance of security whereby at the root of interviews

‘is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience...Interviewing allow us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding action’ (Seidman, 2006:9-10).

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow respondents to highlight some of their vivid illustrations, iconic moments and experiences, as authentic accounts of subjective experience related to wider cultural and organisational contexts (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Long and Godfrey, 2004). And in terms of the contextual relativity of experiences expressed in semi-structured interviews,

‘the interview interaction is an occasion where definition is placed upon the experience of encountering people, places, objects and events...in a fashion that makes it meaningful and accountable for both themselves and their audience...’ (Innes, 2004b:343).

Importantly, semi-structured interviews also allow researchers to probe both positive and negative aspects of experiences, and for respondents to reveal their anxieties and ambivalences behind organisational conformity or inter-group relations and partnerships – or views that might be termed ‘outside the box’ (Miller and Glassner, 2004).

It must be noted that the vast majority of the methodological literature on community policing indicates that it is not amenable to, nor appropriate for quantitative research (Fielding and Innes, 2006; Ferret, 2004; Williamson *et al.*, 2006; Ellison, 2000). In reference to the governance of security literature, as a relatively ‘new’ and emerging academic field, virtually all the methodological notes in the literature are of a qualitative nature (Wood and Marks, 2006; Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Wood, 2006; Dupont, 2006a). In this regard, the use of qualitative-based semi-structured interviews would appear to be sufficiently justified to evidence their subtle contextual and relational elements.

However, semi-structured interviews, while of practical utility to the current research, are not without their limitations. Firstly, the generally reflexive and open nature of semi-structured interviews can lead to an absence of standardisation where the interviewer is not careful in maintaining interview ‘form’ (Sarantakos, 2005). This in turn can lead to a number of problems for the researcher. These may include avoidance of recording extreme or overly negative/positive responses during the transcription process of the interviews. Secondly, interview bias can also greatly affect the interview process. Indeed, factors ranging from social class, race, religion and gender through to the interview setting and interviewer dress sense can contribute to interview bias (Adams, 2000; Campbell, 2003). In this sense, there can never be any absolute guarantee that what respondents say in interviews is true; whether their beliefs are genuine; or whether they may indicate one particular course of action, but upon leaving the interview space, will follow another (McNeill and Chapman, 2005).

### 3.9 Validity and Reliability

Having established within the previous section the justifications for using semi-structured interviews within both the community policing and security governance research, it is important to briefly examine issues of validity and reliability related to such a research methodology.

#### 3.9.1 Validity

At a basic level, validity may be considered simply as the value that can be attached to research findings. This may further be explained insofar as validity represents the extent to which the research method is measuring what the researcher intends to measure. Thus, validity may be assessed

‘by looking at the evidence, at how the research was carried out, whether anything could have interfered with the research process and confused the results, and the nature of the connection between the evidence and the generalisations’ (Hall and Hall, 1996:43).

However, it is important to further explore the concept of validity in reference to both internal and external factors as well as the process of sampling in order to determine the ‘value’ that may be attached to semi-structured interviewing.

Turning firstly to the *internal validity* of qualitative research, Bryman (2004:273) describes this as the match between researchers’ observations and the theoretical ideas they develop which he notes as being a particular ‘strength of qualitative research...because the...participation in the social life of a group...allows the researcher to ensure a high level of congruence between the concepts and observations’. Hall and Hall (1996) argue that semi-structured interviews lack the strictly ‘scientific’ internal validity associated with rigorous methods. However, the very fact that semi-structured interviews are explicitly concerned with capturing perceptions, observations and interpretations without imposing pre-set replies or views on the respondent means that they are perfectly justified in order to gain insight into specific contextual situations (Fielding, 1993; Bryman, 2004). Thus, within the ‘real’ and subjective world of community policing and security

governance, semi-structured interviews may be seen to possess a high degree of *internal validity*.

Looking to *external validity*, this does represent a problem for qualitative research, especially semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2004). Indeed, it is important to recognise this limitation insofar as it refers to the degree to which findings can be generalised across social settings. Silverman (2006) has argued that external validity, or ‘generalisability’, should not really be a concern for the qualitative researcher. In regard to the present research and the specific sample areas of the East and West Belfast, the extent to which observations about community policing and security governance can be ‘generalised’ across other areas in Northern Ireland may be limited. However, it has been argued that qualitative researchers should, at least in policy terms, be open to some general interpretation and not just ‘satisfied with producing explanations which are idiosyncratic or particular to the limited empirical parameters of their study...’ (Mason, 1996:6).

One way in which to improve the external validity of qualitative research is through the process of triangulation, as the use of:

‘complementary methods in order to gain a deeper insight on a research problem. The advantage of using complementary methods is that they enhance capacities for interpreting meaning...This is because the insight gained can strengthen confidence in conclusions by providing multiple routes to the same result (Hoggart *et al.*, 2002 cited in Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006:31).

Although care should be used when adopting triangular approaches, insofar as researchers should not be naïve about the use of different data sources as unproblematically producing a complete research ‘picture’ (Silverman, 2006).

Finally, in attempting to improve the overall validity of qualitative, semi-structured interview research, it is vital to consider the *sampling* process to acquire research subjects. Importantly, the sampling of police and community-based respondents based upon their detailed knowledge, rather than being representative of the population is key to gaining congruence between the research method and what the researcher intends to measure (Hall and Hall, 1996). Rather than basing the sampling process upon the scientific logic of randomised and statistical probability,

qualitative research is suited to non-probability sampling techniques (Sarantakos, 2005).

Non-probability sampling can take a number of forms, which can either be promoted or inhibited according to the levels of gatekeeper comprise and access granted to the subjects (Knox, 2001). These can include:

- **Accidental sampling** – when the researcher randomly meets people;
- **Snowball sampling** – when respondents are asked to recommend other relevant respondents;
- **Quota sampling** – when the research sets the quota of respondents from an organisation;
- **Theoretical sampling** – when the researcher selects respondents according to their level of relevant knowledge and expertise, which can be ‘snowballed’ during the sampling process

(adapted from Sarantakos, 2005).

Indeed, understanding such non-probability sampling processes within the real-world of research may require one or all these techniques to be employed in order to gain access to sufficient numbers of respondents (Mason, 1996).

### 3.9.2 Reliability

The basic tenet of reliability is that it refers to the ‘degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions’ (Hammersley, 1992 cited in Silverman, 2006:282). In general overview of the need for qualitative interviews to sample respondents on a non-probability basis, Brewer (1990) has noted a key consideration in terms of the reliability of overt research within organisations is that reliability is predicated entirely upon access. Indeed, the researcher must always be aware of the fact replication may never be possible because of the practical limitations of gatekeeper demands.

Furthermore, reliability has both internal and external elements which must be considered. Turning firstly to *internal reliability*, this may be viewed as the extent to which more than one observer can conduct research, or agree with other researchers about the same observation (Bryman, 2004; Hall and Hall, 1996). Though for qualitative research, and especially semi-structured interviews, internal reliability can be very hard to achieve for a number of reasons, as shall now be explored.

Unlike surveys or structured questionnaires, the ‘open’ nature of semi-structured interviews makes each of them (relatively) unique due to a number of factors (Fielding, 1993). The most obvious factor which may reduce the level of internal reliability is that of interview bias. This stems from the fact that all interviews are human interactions, and as noted above, factors such as class, gender, race, age through to the physical environment of the research setting can all affect interview responses (Marks, 2004; Adams, 2000; Cicourel, 1976; Eillson, 1997; Brewer and Magee, 1991; McNeill and Chapman, 2005). Even simple problems such as respondent over-agreement or being extremely positive or negative, as well as shyness or ‘playing’ to the tape recorder can all reduce the internal reliability. Indeed, caution must be taken not to fall into this ‘easy’ trap (Elsdon *et al.*, 1998). There are however, some simple steps which can be taken to help mediate some of the problems of internal reliability more generally.

Firstly, it is important to make the interview process as transparent as possible insofar as the research strategy and the data analysis is defined in sufficient detail to the subject. Secondly, the theoretical approach must be adequately explained. And thirdly, while qualitative research does not necessarily lend itself to reliability in comparison with quantitative/positivistic conceptions of research, this can be overcome through the use of ‘low inference descriptors’, or

‘recording observations in terms that are as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what people say, for example, rather than researchers’ reconstructions of the general sense of what a person said...’ (Seale, 1999 cited in Silverman, 2006:283).

Turning briefly to the concept of *external reliability*, it is simply the degree to which the research can be replicated. Bryman (2004) notes this as inherently problematic for qualitative research because of the impossibility of ‘freezing’ social context and circumstances. Here, the (still) divided and segregated nature of Northern Ireland in combination with the constantly evolving social and political landscape will undoubtedly reduce the ability for the research to gain any significant degree of external reliability over time; while limited access to the police organisation will also negate external reliability considerations. However, for the purposes of the research, this is somewhat less of a concern because of the comparative element of the research between East and West Belfast. It is clear from the policing and security governance literature that activities and practices of the PSNI and community-based groups will be unique to East and West Belfast respectively. Thus, researching and capturing that which characterises PSNI and community activity may not be readily amenable to replication anywhere else (Fielding and Innes, 2006).

In overview of qualitative research, Bryman (2004) has generally indicated that it can be too subjective, difficult to replicate, difficult to generalise and subject to flaws which mirror human nature. However, in light of the methodological and research design considerations, including practical issues related to data gathering for community policing and security governance, qualitative semi-structured interviewing is considered to be the most appropriate method. In view of the

literature, it therefore provides the most practical method for gaining an insight of the 'lived' experiences of other people, and indeed for the interpretation of that experience which translates into understanding and social context and action (Seidman, 2006).



### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

When considering the ethics of social research, it is essentially about an examination of the values associated with such work (Bryman, 2004). Ethical considerations may be broken down into two distinct categories – those associated with the methodology; and those associated with the researcher, both of which shall now be examined.

In reference to the former, Israel (2004) has contended that ethical considerations in research are rarely clear cut. However, in regard to conducting qualitative interviews it must be remembered they are not value-free exchanges. Indeed, they are between human beings and therefore generate a ‘relationship’ which in turn generates normative ethical obligations (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). In this regard it is important that the researcher

‘is sensitive to the ethical dimension of interviewing, ensuring the interviewee appreciates what the research is about, its purposes, and that his or her answers will be treated confidentially’ (Bryman, 2004:325).

Implicit within this contention are also obligations of privacy, informed consent and legality. Indeed, voyeuristic ‘tea-room trade’ methodologies do not sit well within ethical approval committees, nor indeed the respondents should they subsequently find out (McNeill and Chapman, 2005; Humphries, 1970; Ellison, 1997). Thus, ‘overt’ and transparent research strategies will help to limit the ethical dilemmas of perceived subterfuge or covert research to access respondents and data.

Developing this further, Bryman (2004) has broken ethics into three differing ‘levels’. Firstly, a ‘universalist’ conception denotes that ethical principles are absolute and should not be broken under any circumstances. Secondly, ‘situational ethics’ denotes that some degree of ‘deception’ may be considered on a case-by-case basis, either where the end justifies the means, or there is no other choice to gain information. Thirdly, ‘ethical transgression as pervasive’ has been used to denote that ‘all research involves elements that are at least ethically questionable. This occurs whenever participants are not given absolutely all the details on a piece of research...’ (Bryman, 2004:505). And to a certain extent researchers must be

dishonest to get honest data (ibid.). Although within the context of social research in Northern Ireland, Israel's (2004) contention on the seldom clear-cut nature of ethics resonates more clearly than would be immediately obvious.

As noted earlier, researching the fields of policing and community activity is a sensitive, emotive and potentially dangerous 'pursuit' (Sluka, 1995; McLoughlin and Miller, 2006; Brewer, 1990). In reference to the differing 'levels' of ethical reasoning (Bryman, 2004), it is important that a certain degree of 'common sense' is exercised. When negotiating access and conducting research within the community sector, (especially Republican areas), it may neither be successful nor potentially safe if the researcher was to emphasise that the research consisted of significant work with the PSNI and the concomitant policing structures. Thus, a combination of 'situational ethics' and 'ethical transgression' may be justified, both to protect the integrity and safety of the research and the researcher – otherwise known as being 'economical with the truth'.

But to conclude, while researchers working within the context of Northern Ireland may naturally have concerns (Sluka, 1995), adhering to some general ethical principles will undoubtedly help to alleviate some of those worries. Indeed, McLoughlin and Miller (2006), through the analogy of Seamus Heaney's 1975 poem 'Whatever You Say, Say Nothing' have eloquently captured what is often the baseline ethical pre-requisite for sensitive research in the 'field' that is Northern Ireland.

### 3.11 Data Analysis

Having explored many of the theoretical and practical issues associated with the research, it is important to finish the chapter by examining how such considerations may be translated into a 'useable format'. Indeed, by their very nature, qualitative semi-structured interviews will produce hundreds of pages of transcribed text, each page saturated with themes, dimensions, properties and concepts (Gibb, 2002). The question therefore, is how best this information may be captured, interpreted and translated into a coherent format which is relevant to what is being researched.

The most useful 'tool' within the realm of social science research is that of 'computer assisted qualitative data analysis software' (CAQDAS). Thus, in view of what is available to the researcher, 'NVivo 8' CAQDAS software was employed. Indeed, NVivo 8 software has the power to both manage, query, model and provide rapid access to qualitative data 'while at the same time retaining ready access to the context from which those data had come' (ibid.:3).

In general terms of its function, the NVivo software (essentially a sophisticated database tool) allows for the accurate recording and storing of qualitative data. Once the data (as transcripts from the semi-structured interviews) have been uploaded onto the software, it then provides a platform from which qualitative details may be analysed down to the finest levels of granularity to capture the 'concepts, categories and ontologies that describe and constitute the world we live in' (Gibb, 2002:1). It is from here that codes may then be added to the original qualitative data as an iterative, recursive and dynamic method of analysis (ibid.).

In order to analyse the qualitative data, a structured process of 'open coding' will be undertaken using NVivo. At a basic level, open coding involves examining the text for salient categories of information (called nodes), which in turn can feed into the overall inductive methodology for the research (Gibb, 2002). Each 'node' can then be further analysed according to its properties (or perspectives), or dimensions (the subtle continuums within a perspective). Indeed, an advantage of this process is that it allows the sorting of qualitative interview data into categories

which mirror the themes contained within the literature, thus improving the inductive process.

It must be noted that CAQDAS is not without its own limitations and flaws. As Bazeley (2007) has noted, such software cannot make good 'bad research'. Fielding and Lee (1998) have also indicated such software can also 'distance' the researcher from the text, possibly leading towards what Bryman (2004) calls 'anecdotalism'. This in turn may lead to the over or under-emphasis for certain aspects of the research data insofar as

'we tend to make more of the evidence that confirms our beliefs...This is a particular problem in qualitative analysis, because of the volume and complexity of the data. Because the data are voluminous, we have to be selective – and we can select out the data that doesn't suit. Because the data are complex, we have to rely more on imagination, insight and intuition – and we can quickly leap to the wrong conclusions' (Dey, 1993 cited in Gibb, 2002:14).

However, CAQDAS provides a more rigorous, systematic method for analysing qualitative data than otherwise be available to the researcher. It may further be viewed as systematic method of studying and categorising the germane issues of community policing and security governance (Ely *et al.*, 1991). And in view of the fact that such data analysis contains a minimum of quantitative standardisation and technique, it provides for increased validity to results insofar as it allows for a degree of triangulation to the overarching research methodology (Sarantakos, 2005).

### **3.12 The Realities of Conducting the Research**

Despite the myriad accounts, arguments and theories in relation to qualitative-based research with PSNI and community-based organisations, the practical implementation and execution of a research strategy is an entirely different matter. Indeed, without the researcher's ability to negotiate with, or persuade 'gatekeepers' and subjects to participate in the research, even the best laid plans will never reach fruition.

The process of 'getting access' to conduct research for the purpose of this thesis may be described as an exercise in persuading potential subjects to give up their own free time to participate in an interview and talk about something for which they otherwise get paid for. The following sections represent an account of the main issues and obstacles faced by the author in the course of 'getting access' and conducting 67 semi-structured interviews (SSIs) between November 2007 and May 2008.

### 3.12.1 ‘Getting Access’ to the PSNI

The original research proposal to the PSNI for permission to conduct interviews with its officers was submitted in May 2007. Sent on the advice of PSNI contacts to a Chief Inspector in Training Branch, the proposal was in retrospect, framed in a more ‘theoretical’ rather than (police) managerial language (Ellison, 1997). Having been summoned to a meeting to discuss the proposal, there was an hour devoted to official PSNI policy on external research and difficulties with previous research attempts – only to be informed four weeks later ‘that at this time your current proposal would not be acceptable’ (see *Appendix B*).

Following careful reconsideration in regard to how the research would progress, the author met with an Inspector, again from Training Branch, who was both more receptive and impressed with the second proposal. Subsequently, having discussed the proposal with the Inspector at the end of October 2007, he arranged an official ‘gatekeeper’ meeting with another Chief Inspector at the Garnerville Training College in East Belfast on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007. Not only was the research proposal successful in being accepted, but through the Inspector as an official ‘liaison’ (with whom an excellent working relationship developed), the author was essentially given a *carte blanche* to conduct interviews with approximately 30 of the PSNI’s Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) across the East and West Belfast District Command areas. Interestingly, it was felt to be of more utility to deal exclusively with the NPTs (as opposed to other units such as response, traffic branch) because it was *only* the NPTs who delivered what may be conceived as community policing at the community level.

The interviews began in earnest on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007, initially in the West Belfast sample area in which the Inspector had previously been posted and thus had a number of contacts ‘on the ground’. Based on those contacts, two PSNI stations (and their respective NPTs) were chosen for the research – one in outer West Belfast, and one in inner West Belfast. A total of eight visits were made to the stations in West Belfast where a total of fifteen SSIs were conducted with members

of the NPTs. Indeed, far from formally selected interview schedules, times or dates, the author was often told to simply ‘turn up’ by the local officers or their Sergeants on days or mornings/afternoons when there would be some ‘down time’ in the officers’ shifts. The majority of the West Belfast interviews were conducted between the end of November and Christmas of 2007.

In order to get effective access to conduct interviews in the East Belfast sample area, the author was passed to a ‘temporary’ liaison officer – an Inspector based East Belfast who facilitated fifteen SSIs across three stations over eight visits to the area. The interviews were again conducted on an informal ‘downtime’ schedule in order to suit the availability of officers. It is interesting to note that across both sample areas, the informal interview schedule often resulted in the author spending significant periods of time in station canteens and NPT offices. This allowed for an ethnographic approach to bolster the credibility of the author, and hence reliability of the interview process. With a good rapport built between the author and officers through constant contact over hundreds of hours, it gave them a sense of confidence in the researcher, and trust in his work. A further five interviews were conducted with officers not specifically designated to the East or West Belfast sample areas, but who were involved in community policing within the organisation and who were available for interviews.

It must be noted in regard to the interview sample, there were less officers of a senior rank than might be expected. In part, this was due to lack of availability of such officers, in spite of numerous emails and telephone calls. Though in part, the concentration upon the lower ranks was a deliberate research strategy – to avoid being given the ‘party line’ and official policy. Indeed, those in charge of that which is being researched are unlikely to be overly critical or partial in their opinions or comments (Marks, 2004). The interviews with PSNI officers are broken down as follows:

**Total Number of Interviews with PSNI Officers:** 35

**Average Length of Service per Officer:** 16.1 years

<b>Interview Broken Down by Rank:</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>East Belfast</b>	<b>West Belfast</b>
<b>- Full-Time Reserve</b>	2	0	2
<b>- Constables</b>	16	7	9
<b>- Sergeants</b>	7	5	2
<b>- Inspectors</b>	8*	2	2
<b>- Chief Inspectors</b>	1*	0	0
<b>- Superintendants</b>	1	1	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

\* ranks from which other 5 officers were drawn who were not dedicated to sample areas

<b>Sampling Rate by Area for NPTs:</b>	<b>East Belfast</b>	<b>West Belfast</b>
<u>Number of Officers Dedicated to NPTs</u>	40	24
<u>Number of NPT Officers Interviewed:</u>	15	15
<b>Sampling Rate:</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>



### **3.12.2 Realities of PSNI Research**

In the course of conducting the research with PSNI, the relative ease with which officers were accessed was not without its ‘cost’. In reference to the need to conduct ‘fair’ research (Greenhill, 1981), it was agreed at the gatekeeper meeting that the author would provide feedback for Training Branch – in the form of including a training specific question into all the interviews with the PSNI officers and community organisations. At the time of writing, PSNI were undertaking a fundamental review of training for new recruits, and also developing a new neighbourhood/community policing programme for existing officers. Thus, it was agreed the author would produce two reports for Training Branch: one based on the responses from the officers; and one based on the responses from the community organisations in regard to training issues.

As a result, the author produced two reports, humorously referred to as the ‘Topping Principles’ at the Training College. Indeed, these were described as a valuable and unique contribution to the development of training for neighbourhood policing, with a formal commendation letter received by the author for his work (see *Appendix C*); use of the reports by the CJINI in their 2009 inspection of PSNI in regard to Policing with the Community (CJINI, 2009); and recognition of the training material by the NPJA.

### **3.12.3 Policing Related Interviews**

In regard to researching other bodies related to the broader policing picture in the Province, five members of the District Policing Partnership (DPPs) East and West Belfast sub-groups were interviewed to provide a more rounded view of policing in the sample areas. The interviews were arranged directly through police contacts in the respective areas, and through the main Belfast DPP office. In respect of the East Belfast sub-group, three members were interviewed (one political and two independent members); and two members were interviewed from the West Belfast sub-group (one political and one independent member).

Unfortunately, no members of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) were ever available for interview. This was in spite of numerous telephone calls and emails, a cancelled meeting with NIPB staff and even a personal letter from Prof. Sir Desmond Rea (the Chair of the Board) expressing interest in the research. The formal request for research access was even tabled in official minutes of their website (see [www.nipolicingboard.org.uk](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk)). However, no interviews transpired.

Finally, five politicians/councillors were also interviewed from the sample area – with three drawn from East Belfast representing Unionist/Loyalist parties; and two drawn from West Belfast representing Nationalist/Republican parties. These were made through established police contacts in East Belfast, and through contacts derived from the community-based research in West Belfast (see *Appendix D* for sample interview guide).

### **3.12.4 Researching Community-Based Organisations**

The advantage of having conducted interviews with neighbourhood officers at the start of the research phase was undoubtedly the knowledge gained about the communities in which the officers worked, the type of community-based groups with which they interacted and the range of contacts they had built up. As local ‘experts’ in what may be termed key intelligence networks (KINs) (Innes, 2004a), the officers in both the sample areas were excellent authorities on local ‘grapevines’, groups and individuals to contact at the grass-roots community level. Once such initial ‘key’ contacts had been made through the officers, community-based groups from East Belfast (LCOs) and West Belfast (RCOs) were sampled and selected using a ‘snowballing’ technique. With no previous research available on such groups, especially with regard to those involved in the governing of local crime issues, they were identified through the close associational networks characteristic of Northern Ireland’s civil society (Brewer, 2001). Having made the initial ‘cold contacts’, often through police officer identification of ‘key’ groups and individuals in the community (although such groups were sometimes self-evident from local newspaper reports), the credibility of the researcher was quickly developed over the course of the fieldwork. Once the researcher’s ‘community credibility’ had been built up (through conducting initial interviews), it allowed for access to a range of organisations, from highly organised and developed restorative justice-type groups, through to independent residents’-type associations who played an active role in local crime and community safety issues, either in parallel or in co-operation with the PSNI. Twenty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted with such groups, with eleven drawn from each sample area. The interviews were usually conducted *in situ*, ranging from the offices of organisations (where available) to local community halls and meeting places commonly used. On average the community-based interviews lasted for forty-five minutes.

### **3.13 Summary of Methodology**

In overview of the design and implementation of the research methodology, it has been clearly demonstrated to be more complex than merely obtaining information from police and community actors. From access to ethics, researcher safety to reliability, working with the PSNI and the community organisations involved in policing is fraught with many subtle and practical difficulties.

One of the key issues to the research design is the need for a methodology which can be applied uniformly across all participants, while maximising the potential for gathering information about an issue which for many, is both contested and contentious. Furthermore, with community policing (identified in the literature) as an inherently amorphous and fluid concept, it is vitally important that the methodology used is ‘open’ enough to capture the myriad interpretations and understandings from both the police and community perspectives. Similarly for the governance of security, the methodological approach has to be robust enough to capture the (potentially) new and innovative information which transpires. Indeed, constraining the flow of data before it has been gathered is not a suitable premise for innovative research.

Finally, what can not be dismissed is the need for a methodology with the ability to capture both the context and reality of community policing and security governance. With policing as very much a ‘real’ issue in policy and practical terms, the methodology needs to be sufficient to get to the core of local policing and security matters. By avoiding aggregating and a-contextual statistical methods, this qualitative model of police and community research provides data of use for the practical delivery of policing and for policy considerations. In this regard, the methodology allows for research which is unique not only in itself, but in terms of its practical utility to further understanding of the work of those who participated.

## **4.0 Interpretation and Analysis– Policing with the Community**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The thesis has so far explored the background of, and critical debates in relation to community policing and the governance of security within the context of Northern Ireland. Thus, in view of the methodological approach adopted to provide the unique, empirical data, the following chapters represent the findings and their interpretation. The findings are based on the views, opinions, attitudes and experiences of participants drawn from both East and West Belfast. This allows for the data to be interpreted according to the concepts of community policing and security governance across areas of developed and developing police-community relations, while enabling significant differences to be highlighted where appropriate. The numbers/letters after quotations denote the coding used to anonymously identify each interview participant.

## **4.2 Community Policing**

The findings for the policing data will be broken down according to the key themes of Policing with the Community as identified in the literature, namely: accountability; empowerment; partnership; problem solving; and service delivery. While none of the categories are mutually exclusive, they provide a framework within which to interpret the empirical data. It should also be noted that the terms community policing, Policing with the Community and neighbourhood policing are used interchangeably throughout.

## 4.3 Accountability

### 4.3.1 Accountability and the Organisation

A key tenet of PSNI's post-Patten drive towards a community policing model, along with attempts to deliver an accountable service to all communities in Northern Ireland has been the need to 'get the police out of the bunkers and onto the streets' (I35). This was exemplified through the observations of one Republican Community Organisation (RCO), privy to the historic meeting between Hugh Orde and Gerry Adams in the Whiterock, West Belfast on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007. Noting the open and transparent approach to accountable policing within the newly supportive Republican/Nationalist communities, it was recounted that the Chief Constable simply stated 'what do you want us [PSNI] to do?' (I60). However, it is important to look beyond the symbolic and towards some of the substantial issues of PSNI accountability within the sample areas.

A recurring theme from the PSNI interviews was the fact police accountability (in its broadest sense) cannot simply be 'implemented' or manufactured within communities through short-termist, symbolic events or meetings (I24). Indeed, *building* perceptions of the PSNI (and its officers) as accountable at the local level was in no uncertain terms a *relational* process between the police and the community. Though interestingly, this *relational* process of 'accountability building' was perceived to be most heavily dependent upon the individual officer level. In this regard, the conduct of officers as representatives of PSNI was deemed to be pivotal – as opposed to generic perceptions of PSNI accountability (and concomitant policing accountability structures) influencing community attitudes about individual officers. It was simply stated by a neighbourhood officer that 'when they [community] think of the police, a lot of them think of me' (I25). Using the example of interaction with certain sections of the community, the officer was the first and *only* face of PSNI – and therefore the only visible and accountable manifestation of the PSNI for that particular group.

However, it must also be noted that because of this ‘individualised’ dynamic to the promotion of locally accountable policing (especially in West Belfast and to a lesser extent East Belfast), local politics impacted upon the relational processes which determined perceptions of accountable policing. In regard to Sinn Féin’s acceptance of the policing structures in January 2007, this impacted significantly upon the interaction between members of the community and individual officers within West Belfast as part of this (developing and relational) accountability process. In a practical sense, this was illustrated by one neighbourhood officer in that

‘I’ve walked around Ballymurphy for 14 years. It’s a hard Republican area. And I get on with most people, but there’s always a bit of abuse and stones thrown at you. But if you knock on door, they’re normal people and will chat away to you like anyone else. But they do this more openly now I have to say. More face-to-face, whereas before they would have been afraid to speak to you because of the political situation’ (I14).

Thus, the findings would suggest that the broad promotion of PSNI accountability as a relational process is premised upon the balance between officers interacting on the ground, and the extent to which the local ‘politics of policing’ allows that interaction to develop. Though beyond such general influences which shape notions of broad PSNI accountability at the community level (through general, individualised relations), it is important to explore the findings in more detail from the officer perspective.

The majority of officers interviewed were also of the opinion that reaching out to local communities and making PSNI more accountable was about trying to use ‘alternative’ means of communication to establish community links (I26). Quite simply, this ranged from officers distributing business cards within beat areas, through to the development of formalised protocols for the removal of abandoned and stolen cars in conjunction with community organisations (I54). However, this was in turn premised upon officers projecting very clearly to communities, the efforts being made to pursue such alternative and innovative means of working and communication – thus, improving community perceptions that officers were working in the interests of *and* for a given community. In this regard,



‘you can talk the talk, but unless you walk the walk, it doesn’t work...you can have all the special squads and hoo-ray cottage industries. But at the end of the day, people identify with the work of the local officers’ (I26).

Also apparent from the responses was a perception that developing broader PSNI accountability was about breaking down barriers between police and ‘harder to reach’ areas/groups (by whatever means), and not merely in relation to what the PSNI actually ‘do’. Recalling a residential three day trip between a neighbourhood policing team (NPT) and a group of children in West Belfast, a neighbourhood Inspector stated that

‘I’ll go back to the Springfield Road where we took kids away for a 3 day residential who were stoning traffic...and when the kids got away and got sitting down and talking to the police, the change! We then went into the classroom and says ‘what do you think of the police?’ – ‘bastards’ and all the rest...at the end of the couple of days, we said ‘what do you think now?’ It broke down a lot of barriers. And people say it’s [neighbourhood work] is a waste of money’ (I26).

The findings also evidenced that efforts by PSNI to improve community perceptions of police accountability at the local level had a transferable dynamic within and across the sample areas. As noted by one pivotal RCO about their work with PSNI in West Belfast,

‘we have felt comfortable going into other parts of West Belfast, South Derry, Armagh, and speak about the positive policing that’s being done in this area [with PSNI]...’ (I52).

Though in reference to the potential for ‘new’ co-operation and relations between PSNI and communities, it is important to revisit the original contention with regard to accountability at the organisational level – namely the impact of individual officer relations on accountability and how that is managed from *within* PSNI.

Firstly, there was a general consensus that in delivering locally accountable and effective policing, the PSNI needed to

‘understand and stop looking at a person [officer] as a unit or being a resource, and get back to the human resource, back to respecting the individual [officer] and what they’re doing in communities. It might not always have a quantifiable outcome [working with the community]. It can’t

always be quantified. But how can you get that across to a superior officer who says 'I need product' (I24).

What was perceived as a prevailing culture within PSNI was not deemed to be conducive to fostering (potential) new forms of practice, innovation or relations which could enhance officer accountability within communities; or that which could not be quantified because accountability *per se* within PSNI gravitated so heavily towards that which can be measured (I24). Secondly, at the heart of the findings and the importance of the individual officer level to perceptions of PSNI accountability were the development of personal one-to-one relations between officers and communities. Thus, officers stressed that such individual working was all about building trust and relationships through *longevity* in communities whereby it 'builds bridges...then it all starts to filter, and that's when it [community-level accountability] starts to work...' (I27). The level of importance attached to building trust (and therefore feelings of accountability) was also apparent from the responses from community-based organisations across the sample areas. According to one group,

'it takes a key person in every organisation you're working with to make them accountable...and so a key person...is very important. I have to say, because of the person we're working with in the PSNI, I think personally it's made it a bit easier...' (I53).

Though in view of the current, rapid turnover of officers within the NPTs, itself recognised as detrimental to perceptions of police-community accountability at the local level, this only amplified the delicate and tenuous nature of this individual-level link to communities. As summarily noted by one senior ranking officer:

'There's always a danger that this accountability is factored into personality. So if someone else comes in with a different style they'll maybe not enjoy the same relationship as their predecessor and policing with the community may suffer. But that's probably going to be the nature of the beast; it'll always be like that' (I17).

In regard to the practical outworking and development of broader police accountability within the sample areas, a basic building block from the NPT perspective was the need for officers to be acutely aware of *how* to engage within an

area; with *whom* to engage; and their ability to identify *key individuals* who provide an efficient ‘accountability link’ (I33). Thus, where such links were created and utilised, they were viewed as crucial ‘foundations’ from which officers could ‘learn’ community norms and values, adjust their working practices to ‘match’ local contexts and therefore increase notions of accountable, legitimate local policing. Thus, what may be inferred is the importance of a ‘participatory’ approach by police officers. On the one hand, such police-community participation benefited PSNI insofar as it was the basis for understanding that

‘there are certain people who work with certain groups of people, so they get the information out. And the closer the relationship between the community and policing, the greater the chances of getting [police] messages out’ (I44).

On the other hand, this ‘participatory’ approach was believed to enhance local perceptions (and reach) of accountable policing insofar as

‘it is the only way forward...the more local people who are kept informed and involved and participate and communicate...the better. Because then there’s a better understanding [of what police do] rather than a select number of people doing the business and no one else knowing what the fuck is happening’ (I54).

However, it must also be noted that a necessary element of this ‘participatory’ approach was that locally accountable policing was not about the PSNI interacting with communities as random collections of individuals within geographically defined areas. Rather, policing was about officers ‘seeing’ communities as (generally) well organised around key individuals and groups (as both leaders to, and beacons of community sentiment). And importantly for PSNI in ‘seeing’ and participating at the community level, it was the strength of such ‘participatory’ working and the feedback to the community level from community ‘gatekeepers’ which was believed to give ‘reassurance to communities that the police are willing to engage in a positive and constructive way’ (I1).

In terms of increasing feelings of community participation and interaction in the police decision-making process (and therefore feeling of accountability and legitimacy), even a minimum level of *critical engagement* was felt to be of more

utility than none at all. As indicated by one LCO in regard to engaging on high priority issues on a necessary rather than cordial basis:

‘I think you need that relationship with the police, even if it’s just for criticism...because if there is no relationship with the police, there’s no holding them to account’ (I59).

In regard to this particular LCO, they had no contact *whatsoever* with the PSNI and had to ‘contact’ the police through a local politician to deal with local policing issues. This in turn generated feelings of exclusion from any conceptions of procedural or distributive justice as part of locally accountable policing.

From a broader perspective, officers also recognised that accountability was also linked to promoting within communities the fact that

‘we [PSNI] aren’t going to be able to do everything [deal with all policing issues]. They [the community] have to take that on board as well...you can’t just come and rant and rave at us...It has to be constructive and something we can work on’ (I14).

This was perceived to be about PSNI (both organisationally and individually) ‘taking it on the chin’ (I15), while being ‘up front’ and ‘honest’ as to their capabilities, resources and limitations (I32). Though as part of developing this relational process between police and communities, the findings would suggest a process which is more complex than simply facilitating nominal or generic forms of accountability within communities.

Part of that complexity stemmed from the fact that community policing is premised upon *genuine* community involvement, which, according to one community organisation ‘is the shock to Northern Ireland’ (I53). Thus, within the complexity of police reform, it was argued there has been an over-concentration upon the implementation of generic, technical and procedural forms of police accountability. This was evident insofar as PSNI’s emphasis upon technical, rather than relational, notions of accountability impacted negatively within the sample areas. In regard to both sample areas, there was a consensus that the police *could not* be accountable at the community level because they didn’t know, or were not part of that community in any relational sense beyond official meetings with the managerial ranks (I51).

This fundamental ‘distance’ between PSNI and communities further generated a sense of ‘unequalness’ in relations, and therefore accountability for local policing delivery. Indeed, the findings evidenced that the PSNI’s lack of ‘community understanding’, or indeed promotion of *meaningful* relationships (beyond a handful of NPTs) generated negative perceptions. This was summarily noted in the words of one LCO who stated:

‘I’m not always convinced the police take under their notice they’re being held to account. I think when they’re in the room with you, they say all the right things...But to be honest, I get the feeling that when they leave the room they go ‘dead on, who do they think they are’...and they’ll be saying all the right things, so they’re pissing up your leg as they say. I come out of meetings with my trouser leg soaking’ (I63).

### 4.3.2 Accountability at the Operational Level

In terms of the operational ‘face’ of accountability within a community policing context, the following section will present and interpret the findings in regard to the attitudes and perceptions of how officers’ police work is both captured and measured from a practical, operational perspective.

There was an overwhelming consensus among neighbourhood officers that because of the multifaceted, subtle and often ‘unconventional’ nature of community policing as a means of dealing with crime and communities, much of their daily work was never actually measured (nor was it amenable to measurement) or appreciated organisationally. Beyond the traditional, affirmative indicators of police work, such as arrests or detections:

‘as far as other things are concerned, they [outcomes of community policing work] are very difficult to measure...if you’ve had a problem in a certain area and you’ve dealt with it, at the end of the day you’ve solved it. But unless it is physical, it’s hard to measure’ (I6).

As reflected in the comments of another officer, because of the nature of community policing work

‘a lot of time it’s not measured, because the authorities are looking for a lot of figures, boxes ticked, thing we’ve done. Whereas when you’re out dealing with people in real situation there’s a lot of things done which can’t be classified into a pigeon hole’ (I23).

And to illustrate what may be considered as the ‘core’ to the dilemma of accounting of the work of NPTs, ‘community policing – it’s probably oriented mostly towards preventing and the avoidance of enforcement. How do you measure something that never was?’ (I17).

It was further noted that difficulties in developing ‘surrogate’ measures to account for neighbourhood work rested on two fronts. In regard to the first ‘front’, with no organisational culture of community policing within PSNI, the upper echelons of management who demanded (and were only interested in) figures and publishable ‘results-led policing’ failed to understand the importance of community policing, its subtle relational processes, or indeed what it was actually about (I24;

I28). A striking example of such organisational myopia was recounted by an officer in West Belfast:

‘I have to say, the targets that neighbourhood [NPTs] achieve aren’t ever recognisable on a target board or anything...I don’t believe you can measure neighbourhood policing. I just don’t believe you can...You should be out, I believe, winning hearts and minds of the people and doing what you can for them’ (I14).

A further limitation to ‘understanding’ the measurement of community policing was the prevailing ‘performance management’ culture with PSNI (I32). Indeed, the majority of officers recognised such a culture had been ‘a problem over the last few years because of Statistics Branch and superiors’ fixation with results-based policing’ (I20). Thus, such an orientation within PSNI was believed to have created a perverse situation for NPTs insofar as officers were not getting credit for reduced crime and improved community relations, but were ‘getting a bollocking’ for not issuing enough tickets’ (I24).

As illustrated by another officer, such performance culture existed to the detriment of long-term *relational* aspects associated with accountable, local policing. It was believed that where the good work of NPTs was juxtaposed with police managers’ monthly figures, NPTs efforts at reducing crime were rarely, if ever, taken into account (I24).

In relation to the second ‘front’ inhibiting the appreciation of (or accounting for) community policing, it was noted that the senior management relations between PSNI, NIPB and DPPs greatly limited, and actually skewed notions of operational accountability with regard to community policing at the local level. This was succinctly illustrated by one Inspector who believed that the fixation on ‘accountability by numbers’ had

‘created a monster – Orde created a monster, the monster that ‘we [PSNI] will be measured’. And unfortunately none of the stuff we do is sophisticated enough to measure the stuff that is important. It’s all about fixed penalties, and by in large, a lot of the stuff we measure is measured specifically to be able to respond to potential criticism of a DPP. So we’re just feeding this thing’ (I66).

Thus, for the NPTs this ‘monster’ was visibly forcing them into a very difficult ‘corner’. On the one hand, officers were trying to deal with local, community-based priorities. But on the other hand, they were hamstrung in terms of being forced to perform duties (and be accountable for such duties) which were dictated by management-led targets, influenced by the NIPB and DPPs and which tended to have little to do with the local needs and priorities of their beat areas in the first place (I9). This was undoubtedly a problem within both sample areas insofar as

‘where there’s a disparity is what the...public want us to account for isn’t part of the [district] priorities. We would find the priorities of the DPP set higher up on the policing plan are not community issues, so I think they haven’t caught up with each other’ (I10).

Thus, with the strategic priorities of districts felt to be *entirely* driven by the targets of the NIPB and DPPs (I29), officers were united in their criticism of this ‘top-down’ target-led approach whereby

‘your policing plans...are for the great and the good...when you get down into the daily problems [crimes within beat areas], the problems on the ground are different from the problems that the great and the good see us addressing’ (I26).

Though from an objective viewpoint, it was a strong contention that in spite of PSNI policy indicating

‘everyone is going this way to Policing with the Community and community policing, which *isn’t* sometimes measurable, we’re still being measured against the old system of counting, crime statistics – the two don’t match...it’s like measuring centimetres with an inch ruler’ (I62).

In this regard, officers noted that organisationally, the PSNI needed to ‘dig deeper’ to integrate more realistic measures of operational accountability for community policing (i7). It was believed ‘measures’ for community policing in their broadest sense needed to have a greater resonance with *consent-based* policing (mandated by Patten) rather than statistics, as an aggregated police conception of public priorities and needs. Suggestions for such ‘surrogate’ measures centred heavily on the use of *localised* satisfaction surveys which captured a variety of satisfaction measures about local policing down to the ward level (I67). Although as



the author discovered in the course of the research, this was most vociferously resisted by the NIPB on the grounds that it would not be 'economically viable'. With the NIPB having therefore removed any such notions of 'localism' through Northern Ireland-wide surveys, it was further believed this current emphasis artificially 'dampened' the underlying variations in public opinion garnered at the local level.

On one hand, specific suggestions for 'measures' of community policing ranged from incidents of 'bottling' and stone throwing in difficult areas, through to the increased use of foot patrols rather than armoured land rovers (I33). On the other hand, respondents also felt that within the new political dispensation, officer accountability at the operational level was as much about educating communities in the fact community policing is a *process* rather than a statistical 'product'. Because under the current target-led culture, it was noted 'the community don't have the understanding that the police have limitation to what they do' (I9). As the findings would further indicate, unless such community education can begin with the 'small steps' of *relational* accountability, operational accountability for community policing work will remain 'stuck' in averaged up priorities (so heavily relied upon by PSNI) which represent everyone, but account for nothing at the local community level.

Looking at the DPPs and their accountability function, in terms of providing a mechanism with which the police and the public may formulate targets and hold the police accountable for local performance, the DPPs, at least from a 'top-down' perspective may be viewed as effective for ensuring

'the local commanders are sticking to and delivering on policing plans, and also bringing issues of concern to the local community and the local community to the police in that area...if you look from that bird's-eye view down, you say yeah, they're doing a great job' (I36).

However, it is set against this 'top-down' perspective that the findings from the 'bottom-up', officer perspective make clear the difficulties for DPPs in providing meaningful, locally situated accountability for the delivery of community policing activities. Firstly, it was indicated by a DPP member that

'there's been too much emphasis on holding the police to account and wanting to hold them to account and demand explanations as to whatever,

and very little of what we *could* do to help [PSNI]...I think it's more important that we [as DPPs] start to focus on what we can do' (I35).

Secondly, it was recognised that the 'top-down' approach to holding the PSNI to account through DPPs flew in the face of, and in fact detracted from accountable, local policing insofar as

'one of the big issues was the local policing plan. I found it difficult because we'd [DPP] done consultation on a local level with communities and individuals on a list of local policing priorities. But when you merge it into the main policing plan...the Policing Board want A,B and C and you want X, Y and Z' (I37).

And in view of the PSNI's stoical adherence to the performance-based, measurable statistics, it was further noted PSNI tended to 'fall more heavily on the Policing Board's side, or the official statistics, rather than the local one' (ibid.).

Thirdly, in relation to the DPP reliance upon statistics for local policing performance, the majority of respondents felt that beyond their symbolic value, the DPP function was to all intensive purposes a 'tame poodle' of what Patten had envisaged (I130MT) and 'a total and utter waste of time and has led to the production of statistics not worth the paper they're written on' (I46). Even a senior officer within Policing with the Community Branch of PSNI intimated that

'all they're interested in is statistics and resources and crime figures. That's what I would like to ask Shearing [Patten Commissioner] – did you mean they [DPPs] would turn into something that would only hold the police to account for figures at the expense of the public who want real answers to real problems...' (I62).

A fourth (and significant) finding was the lack of value which officers and community organisations attached to the value of the statistical 'accounts' of police activity produced as by DPPs. The 'meaningless' nature of the statistics and priorities they produced was illustrated through a number of NPTs responses, along with their approach in dealing with them:

'put it like this, for example last year, we said we'd increase our youth diversion referrals for the year...that target might be five a month – you can get those in one night and that's it done for the month, so the rest of the month you needn't bother. It's the same for other targets you know' (I32).

From the community perspective, it was apparent that statistics were merely a tool used for political ‘point scoring’, and not for measuring the work of local NPTs (I65). Thus, in terms of the ‘aggregated’ nature of such statistics in the first instance, the DPPs failed to provide any local, specific context to policing, and laterally crime problems at the community level. As even proffered by a DPP member, they suggested that in terms of their own statistics:

‘99% of people don’t care if someone is burgled two miles away...literally that’s the attitude the public have...the DPP level is too far up the food chain for people to be concerned’ (I35).

Finally, with ‘statistical obsession’ as the ‘organisational glue’ which the findings would suggest hold the DPPs and PSNI together on operational accountability matters, it may be observed that such emphasis pushed ‘community’ out of community policing and it’s more holistic approaches to dealing with crime more generally. Thus, it was indicated by a DPP member that the DPPs and PSNI can *only* start to think about accountable local policing through beginning to think

‘about society – if you think about DPPs as just part of the civic policing structure, then I think you’re missing the point of how you start to deal with criminality in society...’ (I51).

Indeed, to one senior officer involved in the RUC’s ‘Patten Change Team’ prior to 2001, the level of accountability provided by DPPs for the diligent and strident efforts of the NPTs in delivering community policing was in no uncertain terms described as

‘a sorry and sad reflection of what Patten had envisaged, with no bite to them. And that suits the police [managers] because they don’t want that critical engagement...they want these tame poodles on the [Policing] Board’ (I61).

### **4.3.3 Accountability – Summary of Findings**

- Gap between what is measured by PSNI and what community identify as important issues;
- Accountability is a relational process between individual officers for their actions and not a statistical product;
- Accountability as a relational process is a long-term process with officers needing to ‘see’ communities and their properties and identify/work with key individuals;
- The impact of politics upon accountability’s relational qualities;
- For communities to feel officers are accountable to them, they need to be seen to be reaching out and breaking down barriers which in turn has a positive, transferable quality;
- Where accountability is factored into personality and good will alone, it is liable to break down more easily;
- Accountability is about PSNI educating the community about the limits of their work as much as about what they actually ‘do’;
- Consensual community policing styles can not be measured under current PSNI accountability regimes;
- PSNI are not making serious attempts to develop surrogate measures for community policing;
- PSNI’s current performance culture is detrimental to the necessary relational community processes which promote accountability;
- Current Policing Plan and DPP ‘measures’ of PSNI accountability do not reflect local community issues and concerns because they are artificial, ‘top-down’ constructions;
- Communities are being educated that accountability is merely a statistical product, not a relation;
- DPP targets are manipulated by officers to merely ‘get them done’;
- Targets are an ‘easy’ way for PSNI to claim they are accountable to communities for their activities.

## **4.4 Empowerment**

### **4.4.1 Police Perspectives on Empowering the Community**

In regard to the findings on empowerment, a key issue to emerge was the need for officers to be afforded their own autonomy in discharging their neighbourhood role. In view of the need to both engage and work with local communities on local issues, officers believed it was vital they were

‘left alone...as Patten says, each beat manager is in charge of their area. That sort of thing is fine if we’re left in charge of our own area. But if we’re not, it breaks your communications [with the community]’ (I28).

In regard to the level of autonomy afforded to NPTs across the sample areas, a notable feature was the variable and inconsistent nature with which it was applied by police managers and area commanders – affected by local priorities and attitudes of managers to community policing, along with the local context of policing in the area (I14).

Across East and West Belfast, responses relating to officer autonomy ranged from being ‘non-existent’ through to being a vital, if poorly managed ‘tool’ in the neighbourhood officer armoury. As summarily illustrated in one response, being empowered through autonomy:

‘doesn’t happen! No, it doesn’t happen...you may well think you’ve got to go and see somebody. But then you come in and you realise you have got to cover a meeting or go to an event...it would be nice to just come in and say ‘I’m going to do my area today’, but you can’t do that – and surely the decision isn’t ours and it never has been to my knowledge and don’t think it will come in the future either. So I don’t think we have much empowerment’ (I15).

At least in East Belfast, this situation was somewhat tempered in that NPTs (in some cases) noted some degree of autonomy to carry out community policing duties. However, this tended to be the minority officer view, and again was inconsistent between the various NPTs with only a handful believing they had sufficient autonomy to determine their own priorities and working patterns within their beat

area (I24). Thus, it was clear across the sample areas that a bureaucratic, ‘top-down’ management approach prevailed over the necessary ‘bottom-up’ reality of and need to empower officers to work and develop relations with the grain of communities. Even at the community level, organisations identified this trend whereby

‘part of the problem has been basically, overall policing – not the willingness of the bobby or sergeant on the ground to interact on the ground, but the dictates that are forced upon them from higher up [the organisation]’ (I40).

Though beyond the individual NPT perceptions regarding empowerment, a notable feature of the responses centred upon the officers’ need to ‘understand’ the community in which they worked. In its most simplistic form, officers believed that within their own beat area

‘it’s up to me and my team to try and find out what the concerns of that neighbourhood are. And if the concerns of that neighbourhood in relation to the policing of that area mean that we need autonomy in terms of the hours we work etc...who we engage with, I think the area commander should allow for that...’ (I33).

Officers also noted that where such an approach to empowerment was adopted, it actually *reduced* the bureaucratic decision making processes by facilitating direct community engagement at the neighbourhood officer level to deal with local issues raised by local communities in ‘real time’ (I6). This approach was perceived to have significant benefits for the community policing approach in that

‘when the police start to behave and enforce the law in a way that’s acceptable to the community, then I think you will see empowerment taking place insofar as people will respect and see the police acting in a way that coalesces with their culture’ (I17).

Furthermore, through targeting key individuals for engagement within communities, officer empowerment was about ‘knowing’ who was the right person (or gatekeeper/representative) within the community to deal with; and having the autonomy to engage with them in an effective manner to deal with local issues (I33; I10).

However, the findings also suggested that officer attitudes to empowerment, and indeed empowering the community to work with officers were not universal

between the NPTs of the sample areas. Indeed, such variable attitudes to community empowerment were typified by one officer who stated:

‘I wouldn’t say it [empowerment of communities] should be increased. I think there’s enough, there’s probably too many community groups...The likes of West Belfast, there’s that many different groups...even on the Falls for example, you’ve that many friggin groups in the Lower Falls, it’s an absolute nightmare...I think there’s enough empowerment of the community’ (I6).

On the one hand, this position was partly qualified by the suggestion that the empowerment concept had been badly managed to the extent it placed unrealistic and undefined expectations on officers at all levels and communities (I27). Though on the other hand, more senior and experienced officers believed that there were deeper, organisational issues underpinning the variable officer attitudes. Firstly, as noted by one ranking officer in respect of West Belfast:

‘I look to West Belfast and see some enlightened individuals [officers], but culturally, I see people who are floundering. I see people who were policing with militaristic, harsh, robust policing models 15 years ago in West Belfast who are now in the NPTs, and in many cases it was a way out of the paperwork side of things – a repository for those who were not particularly well disposed to investigations. But they’ve not had any training to tell them about what a neighbourhood officer does, so they’re gunned up and tooled up. Certainly in West Belfast it’s a bit of a misnomer calling them neighbourhood officers. They’re still policing...in armoured land rovers’ (I61).

Secondly, beyond individual officer and organisational issues, the ‘tools’ with which to assist the practical, ground-level empowerment of communities were a significant weakness. This was most vocally expressed in regard to the ‘Policing with the Community Fund’ (PwC). The £2m Fund (initiated in 2006) was designed to provide the NPTs and their managers with potential funding source for local, community-based initiatives and projects as part of the Policing with the Community ethos. Ranging from educational DVDs through to football trips, the theory behind the Fund was to provide the resources for police-community initiatives which directly impacted on police relations with groups and communities at the local level. In relation to the premise of the Fund,

‘if they’re [the community] seeing the likes of the PwC Fund, it’s a good idea because it’s helping us [NPTs] to make in-roads with the community within our area...and it’s also benefiting the community because it’s giving them something for their kids to do, or it’s them basically having something as simple as the kids going away to play football and the police being there, and that’s something that would never have happened before...’ (I11).

However, aside from empowering officers to effectively participate in, and work with the community as the ‘human face’ to community policing, it was the *organisational* limits on the Fund which tended to make its positive use and distribution (as above) the exception rather than the rule. As summarily noted by one organisation, ‘you see, the Policing with the Community Fund is administered by police, so they divide and pick and choose what [projects] they think suits them’ (I38). Such attitudes reflected the feeling that this fund to empower local communities (and indeed officers to work with them) was *deliberately* restricted so as to ‘weed out’ groups who could potentially be perceived as ‘politically contentious’ to fund (ibid.).

Even from the officer perspective, the criteria with which it was administered was itself prohibitive in terms of effecting empowerment. As one officer stated:

‘the Policing with the Community Fund is very hard to use. I’ve a perfect thing [project] here, but nobody will sponsor me from the community. You need 20% match funding, and there’s money sitting in the Fund that I can’t use...how useful is it? The criteria is wrong. It should be if you’ve got a good idea, take the money and go for, you’re doing something which is going to improve the standard of living, quality of life in your areas, you can’t get it. There’s a good years work down the drain, and I can do nothing more with it’ (I28).

With empowerment as an essential element to the community policing philosophy, officers were visibly frustrated at the restrictions placed upon their individual neighbourhood officer role, and at organisational restrictions which reduced innovative and ground-breaking work within the ‘fabric’ of communities to mere aspiration. As succinctly remarked by one Sergeant, such restrictions struck at the very heart of empowerment as part of the community policing ethos insofar as such work was



‘far more real than going to a road traffic accident, criminal damage, taking a statement, filling in a form – then going away. That’s what *response* do and that’s *their* job. The stuff we’re [NPTs] doing is a hell of a lot deeper and goes into the fabric of the community, and there’s less resources allocated to that than anything else’ (I7).

#### 4.4.2 Community Perspectives on Empowerment

When considering the findings on empowerment from the community perspective, a striking feature of the responses was the fact ‘empowerment’ was far from a value-free terminology with which to denote (potential) avenues through which the community may play a part in local *policing* solutions in tandem with the *police*. In terms of PSNI attitudes to empowerment (as perceived by the community), it was deemed to be heavily influenced, and in many cases predicated upon the legacy of the conflict rather than merely a ‘state’ of working under the community policing banner. Thus, with the myriad conflict-related social, political and culture factors having divorced the police from the community, it was a PSNI officer who noted the need for a change in police attitudes towards the community insofar as:

‘I think it’s taken a while for police to catch up with that [prejudiced] mentality because they [officers] said in the past they [paramilitaries within communities] did that’. It [the Troubles] was terrible, but if you want to have community policing, you can’t just cut them [the community] out and say we can’t be part of that. I think it’s getting over that now, and it was from both sides – people from one side of the community going ‘that’s just the RUC and we can’t work with them’; and then you have the policing family going ‘they’re a terrorist organisation, we cant work with them’ (I62).

This response was reinforced at the community level by the views of a DPP member, who, in spite of working with the PSNI still noted

‘but they, the police, and see the way I call them ‘they’ – there’s us and them. And that’s *my* culture coming out. I wouldn’t talk about university students as ‘them’. And that’s the culture of separateness that needs to be broken down. And at its core, that is what it’s about. It’s Gary White [A District Commander] feeling free to be able to move about West Belfast without getting a security check first, or that he feels himself, and those that police West Belfast feel that ‘this is our society’ in the same way that those who live in West Belfast...say ‘this is our place, we’re gonna take responsibility for it’ (I51).

Thus, the level of ‘closeness’ between communities and PSNI culture and attitudes was clearly significant in promoting or inhibiting the extent to which communities were *prepared* to be empowered to work with the police. Indeed, it was generally the view that the ‘smoothing’ of the ‘rough’ social, political and culture ‘edges’ to

police-community interaction and empowerment would naturally be a long-term process with the post-conflict space – an issue which went much deeper into the ‘social fabric’ of society (I58).

Though in spite of the restrictions to effective community empowerment (as imposed by political or social issues), community respondents were aware that a number of experienced officers did view community organisations as ‘effective conduits’ as part of the empowerment process. Within the vibrant and active realm of East and West Belfast’s community sector (I64), a number of such experienced officers felt that there were

‘lots of well placed groups in the community to deal with problems...but I think police need to be honest – I think officers need to be honest with themselves and say this is a problem I can’t deal with [on my own], but there needs to be methods in place...to then identify who are [better placed], the best placed people within this community to deal with the problems’ (I33).

In further recognition of the value of community organisations to the community empowerment process, officers also noted that

‘I get the impression they [community groups] felt they have their own responsibility. Because certainly, in a lot of meetings it was a case of ‘our’ youth and ‘our’ community – they recognised the need to get in there and help their own people’ (I32).

It may be inferred that communities and their organisations across the sample areas were already empowered (to some extent) to play a role in local solutions to local policing problems insofar as their work on criminogenic issues existed regardless of relationships with the police (I10; I52).

A key feature of community organisations as ‘social supports’ (with a prevailing tendency towards community empowerment) were the ‘community actors’ which comprised them. It was observed by an experienced neighbourhood officer that such key actors were an important part of the broad, social framework within the post-conflict space that helped sustain the conditions necessary to support community infrastructures – which in turn maintained social solidarity and limited criminal activity. As noted,

‘there are good things that have happened [in regard to crime issues], but I don’t believe the PSNI have changed it. It’s because people who were previously paramilitaries who are now becoming involved and inclusive and they’re now realising ‘that’s not the way to go [paramilitarism] – we need to be community workers or whatever, and as part of that we have to engage with the police more’ (I24).

It was therefore deemed that when police recognise pre-existing levels of empowerment within communities, and both embrace and link into such community structures:

‘out of that, the cops get a whole community, not just a pair of eyes – a whole community! And then you can seriously start to work in partnership [with police] to address not just reducing crime, but resolving issues’ (I42).

In terms of ‘resolving issues’ and ‘gaining a community’ as part of community empowerment process, the findings would also suggest the qualities associated with the sample areas (in terms of managing criminogenic issues) were valuable to the police in terms of providing a ‘gateway of understanding’ to the many social issues which often ‘ended up’ as police problems. Thus, within the broader context of community policing, emphasis on the ‘social’ through empowering well positioned community organisations was a more effective method to deal with social issues not strictly within the PSNI remit, while providing a more holistic *policing* solution to deal with local crime problems. As evidenced through the example of one neighbourhood officer who had looked at dealing with youth/anti-social behavioural issues and providing diversion for youths from criminal behaviour,

‘there used to be an old club there, the education board closed it down. So we spoke to the community to get a sub-committee...we got the community together – they’re empowered now to work in the project, and the knock-on effect for the whole community...we’re putting them in touch with people to train them in fundraising, report writing – it’s fantastic’ (I27).

The findings also highlighted that empowerment on this basis would be valuable insofar as it avoids community empowerment merely on the basis of crime issues *per se*. Rather, this approach to empowering the community simultaneously created a two-way relationship between the police and the community, while concentrating upon the causes as opposed to the consequences of crime.

From the community perspective, effective empowerment also provided a ‘window’ of understanding through which the police could grasp the social complexity of, and facilitate solutions to, local problems according to specific local contexts. And at the core of the findings regarding community perspectives on empowerment, it may be observed that

‘empowering the community is all about us [NPTs] being honest, and equally them [community-organisations] being honest back and saying we’ve got these issues, and this is how the police can help us, and this is what we can do...’ (I32).

Though from an objective community viewpoint, the police must always be alert to the limitations attached to empowering community groups and key actors within communities – because for many groups across the sample areas,

‘the bottom line to empowerment is that we’re working with the police, but we don’t want to cosy up to them. That sense of ‘yes, we work with you [PSNI] and have to work together to get things done’. But we’re not going to cosy up to you because at the end of the day, they’re still the law and there’s *always* that distance’ (I56).

### **4.4.3 Empowerment – Summary of Findings**

- Need for significant increases in autonomy afforded to officers/currently applied very inconsistently as officers not ‘trusted’ to work on their own;
- Management dictates and target culture detracts from officer autonomy to work in the community and with the grain of the community;
- Officers need to be given more space to determine their own priorities, targets and community issues for community policing to work, but it is not happening;
- Variable officer attitudes to empowering communities and community groups due to cultural separation engendered as a result of the conflict;
- Empowerment ‘tools’ within PSNI superficial, insufficient, bureaucratic and un-wieldy, dictated by politics, political correctness and what will help crime figures;
- Empowerment of communities and their groups still heavily influenced by local politics and the culture of the conflict – long-terms issues to be addressed;
- Key community organisations can act as conduits for community empowerment, with many communities already empowered;
- Such key community organisations as social/community supports for social solidarity, community frameworks and community action;
- Empowered communities provide gateways of understanding into community life, values and organisation;
- Empowerment more than just the police gaining the eyes and ears of the community;
- Effective police/community empowerment provides the potential for new partnerships and ideas to be introduced into policing, leading to innovation, synergy, alternative and holistic solutions to local community problems.

## 4.5 Problem Solving

### 4.5.1 Traditional Perspectives on Problem Solving

At its most basic, problem solving, as part of the Policing with the Community ethos was believed to be one of the key elements of a neighbourhood officer's skill set insofar as NPTs felt 'that's what we are – community policing officers are problem solvers' (I28). With general recognition of the elevated importance of problem solving as a means of dealing with crime since Patten (I30), it was clearly fundamental to the core of the NPTs work, especially in view of the sentiment that

'problem solving is the *only* way forward – we can't do it [policing] on our own. We tried for years and years, but we couldn't do it. Problem solving is the only way forward. It takes the onus off the police because police cannot do everything...' (I14).

However, it is important to further explore the findings with regard to problem solving as a vital part of community policing. This is especially so in view of the fact large sections within the PSNI 'look upon it [community policing/problem solving] as the airy fairy part of policing, you know, the fluffy bit. It is more important, it is the bit that works' (I7).

Central to the process of problem solving by neighbourhood officers was the need for an understanding of crime – not in the police-centric legalistic sense, but as part of broader policing issues to which pro-active, participatory and collective solutions in partnership with the community were required (I42). As part of that process, officers attached a great deal of value to what may be viewed as the traditional 'Peelian' conception of policing – notably the police working with the consent of those policed, with a mutual recognition of each others roles, responsibilities and limitations. In order to create such understandings between officers and the community in regard to problem solving processes, an *informal* approach was felt to be the most effective. As articulated by an officer who subscribed to this position:

'I'm one of the old brigade. I believe in informal approaches because I think formal only works to a certain degree between the bosses and the

council...when you come down to the ordinary working people, formality...doesn't work' (I19).

Discretion was also deemed a key 'weapon' for maximising informal approaches to problem solving in conjunction with the community (and the social realities which comprise them), especially in the longer term. This was illustrated by one officer who stated that when

'we're out doing community policing, you use your discretion for certain things. You may see somebody doing something and you may decide to give them advice and warning for it. That person may then come on board with what you want to do because you dealt with them fairly...' (I24).

Although in a movement away from the 'old brigade' perspective, the value of discretion within the organisation was perceived to be actively discouraged in view of pressures to produce statistics and measures of work. As summarily noted:

'so there's a detection you could have had which would have boosted the figures in the short term, but in the bigger picture of problem solving policing in that area, it would have been better not to. What's the big thing now? Doing nothing is not acceptable, whereas old fashioned discretion (which is not turning a blind eye) is now frowned upon' (I24).

Significantly for the informal, discretionary and consensual style of problem solving policing, officers perceived that such an approach allowed for greater access into, and working with, the norms and values of communities. As identified by one senior officer:

'neighbourhood policing has to have the golden thread of problem solving through it. If neighbourhood officers aren't solving local policing issues...there's no sense in having them then. Neighbourhood is not just about befriending people – there has to be buy-back for us...we're getting intelligence from that. We're getting to know the community; we're using our community contacts to problem solve' (I26).

It is also significant to note that through such an approach, officers felt able to access key individuals and groups within a locale to aid in the problem solving process. On the one hand, where neighbourhood officers lacked sufficient community knowledge to solve a local problem, they could contact such key individuals to glean 'community intelligence' as to the nature of a particular problem. On the other hand,



where key individuals participated in the 'buy-back' process (as above), it provided an 'alternative' means through which officers could deal with problems without resorting to criminal sanctions. As explained:

'we [NPT] have a couple of community reps as important links who we would contact if we have any problems. For example, we had problems up the back of the shops here, kids drinking and stuff, anti-social behaviour. And any of the operations we [NPT] had run hadn't got to the source of the problem because we were just moving them on...Whereas dealing with the community reps who knew the kids' families, who could go to the door and say 'it's not on'...that's just one example, and the problem was knocked on the head' (I25).

It was also clear that a necessary element of this informal, consensual approach to the problem solving was the need for officers to understand the subtle, social conditions of their given community which (potentially) supported criminogenic activity. This was about officers having a grasp of local, social issues, which, while not necessarily crimes *per se*, could potentially snowball into situations which required police attention (I18); and also about officers having a deeper understanding of such issues which needed to be dealt with by external (statutory) agencies. Thus, not only did problem solving require neighbourhood officers to have the skills to act as conduits between the community and external agencies in dealing with problems (*ibid.*), but they needed the skill to combine these elements. As illustrated:

'an example is say a problem with a family, so it isn't just a problem for the PSNI...there may be alcoholism, bad parenting. A whole lot of those associated factors dragging that family towards criminality. Now, if the PSNI are going in and battering the hell out of them and telling them to shut up, that doesn't solve the problem' (I51).

The findings would also suggest that within PSNI there needs to be more value attached to, and encouragement made of, officer abilities to stray outside their strictly legal remit, and provide a pro-active service which is both flexible and knowledgeable across a range of responsibilities.

It must be noted that a number of conditions were apparent, both organisationally with PSNI and as part of community attitudes, which adversely affected the problem solving process outlined thus far. Firstly, outside the individual

abilities of neighbourhood officers and NPTs to effectively problem solve within their area, a senior ranking officer believed that as part of PSNI culture:

‘what we tend to do, we don’t solve it [crime], and there’s a lot of displacement particularly around the quality of life stuff. We deal with the stuff down a dark alley as opposed to *community* safety...the socio-economic conditions, education, social conditions, what’s available from youth services...we always, always put a sticking plaster on it and deal with the symptoms, not the underlying problems – never. In all the years I’ve been involved in this, I don’t ever remember any of the teams or committees I was involved in getting down to the underlying causes – just the symptoms’ (I66).

Secondly, officers also perceived that organisational pressures within PSNI played a key role in restricting local problem solving capacities. With reduced resources as the ‘fact’ of the new post-Patten policing dispensation in comparison resources available in the past, it meant ‘where they [RUC] had the resources to do that stuff which was outside the strict policing remit, that’s *not* the case any more, and it certainly won’t be the case in the future’ (I36). With the RUC having peaked at around 13,500 officers during the Troubles, it had created an expectation (more evident within Unionist/Loyalist areas) that when ever the police were phoned, and for whatever reason, the police would attend to deal with the issue (I33).

Even an officer involved in the larger change processes associated with the Patten reforms openly admitted that problems existed with regard to the resourcing/problem solving dilemma. Not only did they state that the whole organisation was in fact shifting away from problem solving and towards a response, ‘blue light’ model because of the resourcing constraints, but they also stated on a more general plain

‘the neighbourhood policing project essentially collapsed...because it didn’t take into account the extensive reduction in resourcing that was going to occur during those [Patten] years’ (I29).

Thirdly, there was an acknowledged insistence with PSNI that they still saw themselves as ‘separate and somehow expert’ with respect to problem solving (I66):

‘telling the community about what they [PSNI] know are best for the community – ‘we’re the police and we’re the experts on law and order, and here’s what you’re going to get, and not only are you going to get it, you’re going to like it’ (I62).

However, in view of what may be viewed as a ‘catch-22’ situation where NPTs failed to strike a balance between the law enforcement and consensual models of problem solving as part of their own ‘expertise’ (and when combined with the limitations of resource constraints), it left officers wide open to criticism insofar as ‘whenever something isn’t done, or done right, it is easy to blame the police’ (I18).

A final issue with regard to problem solving was the disparity between the informal, consensual approaches to problem solving and the quantitative, measurable demands of PSNI managers. As a pre-cursor to the findings on the modern aspects to problem solving, officers believed that as part of the managerial shift towards performance and target culture,

‘it’s trying to formalise the informal things, [it would be better] spending less time having to follow a particular procedure from A to B. For me, it would be time better spent. We were working from the SECAPRA model, and a lot of it was un-necessary’ (I15).

As wryly suggested by one neighbourhood officer in regard to computerised and quantitative documentation of problem solving:

‘here’s how you open a problem solving folder [gestures to computer]. We don’t need to open a problem solving folder, we just need to solve the fucking problem – go do it! Because the amount of time I’ll sit behind a computer trying to write a problem solving folder...you could have the problem solved’ (I28).

Though in regard to the apparent ‘obsession’ with measuring all aspects of police work, and in combination with the fact problem solving (as part of the community policing philosophy) is essentially about engaging with communities and individuals in often non-standard (and sometimes unconventional) ways, more fundamental reasons we posited as to this disconnection. At the nub of aligning individual officer and NPT ‘know-how’ and what may be viewed as the managerial ‘want-to-know-how’, it was in no uncertain terms stated by a senior officer:

‘They [PSNI] trotted out the SECAPRA model, and no sooner had they done that until, well, it’s lack of utility and how much it was at with the whole idea of community policing – it died a death of thousand cuts until someone eventually put it down two years ago. And in many ways, it [PSNI emphasis

on problem solving] encompasses the whole dichotomy of policing here. Because they couldn't even leave that alone – CAPRA, they couldn't even leave that alone, and had to stick an 'S' for security on that...the world product wasn't even good enough for them, they had to corrupt that as well. And then in essence it was useless, because you justify [managerially] your lack of engagement [with communities] – it was a handy get out clause because of security considerations. It emasculated it [problem solving with communities]' (I61).

### 4.5.2 Modern Imperatives of Problem Solving

In regard to the modern imperatives associated with police problem solving processes, a contextual ‘marker’ may be viewed through the work of the NPT respondents. Indeed, experienced officers within the NPTs who possessed local information (analogously compared with ‘the knowledge’ of a London taxi driver) were able to effectively and efficiently turn ‘crime intelligence’ (information on a specific incident or problem) into an all-encompassing ‘criminal intelligence’ (combining incident information with local knowledge). This was explained by an officer in that

‘they’ll come in here [to the NPT office], intelligence or whoever – ‘have you spoken to neighbourhood?’, and they’ll say no. But when they come in [to the NPT office] to ask about something, you see them writing like mad. They’re [NPTs] a wealth of intelligence and knowledge...’ (I26).

However, it was apparent that in spite of NPTs as a valuable source of such local ‘criminal intelligence’, it was clear such information was neither used effectively or channelled properly outside the immediate remit of the NPTs (ibid.). Firstly, as part of the ‘compartmentalised’ and ‘silo’ nature of the PSNI as an organisation, it was held that the sharing of such information was restricted insofar as:

- officers generally not affiliated or working directly with the NPTs failed to appreciate the value of the information possessed by the NPTs, or understand the potential contribution of such information to their own work (I62);
- the ‘silo’ mentality to problem solving information sharing was further compounded by the fact such ‘criminal intelligence’ was seen as an inexact science within the rest of PSNI; and
- the unintended (and seemingly unplanned for) consequence of the Patten severance scheme (along with the phasing out of the Full-Time Reserve) was the drain on the experiential base, especially within neighbourhood teams.

In regard to the haemorrhaging of experienced neighbourhood officers along with their ‘seasoned’ problem solving capabilities:

‘part of the problem with that, if you look at it dispassionately, it’s not about losing that particular officer or that group of officers. But it’s about saying...you’ve lost all those relationships that have been built up over a long period of time [within the community], you’ve lost the connection with the people and it takes a long period of time to build that up again. You’ve lost a skills base. Some of the officers know for example, with youths causing annoyance, they’ll have dealt with their families before and know the parents well enough to talk to them reasonably and rationally – so there’s a relationship there which is quite important in terms of actually being able to *police* communities well. But that will disappear’ (I36).

But having explored the background to the ‘clash’ of the ‘traditional’ and modern contexts with regard to problem solving within PSNI, it provides the context for the modern emphasis on problem solving – or what may be viewed as a slide towards a culture of measuring and defining the problem solving process in *managerial* rather than *community* terms (I29).

In reference to the ‘place’ of problem solving within the broader Policing with the Community programme, the findings would suggest that the lack of corporate direction or guidance on community policing allowed for the subjective elements of problem solving to be displaced by the certainty of measurable, quantifiable problem solving processes and methods (I17). Indeed, this was part of the wider emphasis within PSNI relating to performance-based problem solving as opposed to problem solving *per se*,

‘because once they introduced that [performance management] then all the measurements by and large were quantitative...and not particularly meaningful in community policing language or philosophy...that’s *all* it was about, and coupled with the desire to respond [focus on response policing], community policing died’ (I66).

The findings would further indicate that problem solving has thus been reduced to an exercise in producing tangible indicators and outcomes about *demonstrating* how PSNI are problem solving, as opposed to an actual appreciation of the ‘traditional’ processes which comprise effective community-based problem solving processes. As reflected in one response, the essential elements of the problem solving process are being replaced by a need

‘to change statistics, to make records look good, to measure response times. It’s all about what looks good on paper, and unfortunately, neighbourhood policing doesn’t look good on paper’ (I41)

Or in other words, produce an end ‘product’ which ultimately claims that problems solving within communities is being ‘done’.

It was also held by officers that such an emphasis ‘removed’ their autonomy in the problem solving process. With the requirement for community-based problem solving being subsumed under targeted management demands from the NIPB and DPPs, it created on the one hand a disparity between what were ‘local community problems’ and ‘statistically reasoned problems’ (which were artificially dictated by ‘top-down’ targets in the first instance. On the other hand, this situation created a disparity between the need for the NPTs to discharge their practical problem solving roles, and the need to ‘hit’ the performance target ‘problems’ that were identified and which they were obliged to meet. This was reflected by one officer who stated

‘our performances aren’t related to [NPT] job specific issues, so they’re not really complementary to each other...I feel that performance...should be role specific. Say for community officers, my priority should be starting POPs [problem solving folders]...those sorts of things. As opposed to traffic issues which I have to prioritise sometimes because I have my performance targets to make. The targets and performance appraisals have taken priority and you have to get everything else fitted in afterwards’ (I10).

Significantly, even a DPP member highlighted this disparity by arguing that the PSNI and NIPB emphasis upon *police* problems to be solved actually divorced the police from the realities of *community* problems and from the ‘traditional’ processes which could effectively deal with crime problems (I35). Officers even felt insulted by the modern emphasis on target-driven problem solving which they felt devalued their own abilities to work with and solve community issues at the local level. As summarised in the response of one neighbourhood Sergeant:

‘to be honest, statistics, it’s nice to know there’s a problem with criminal damage and assaults between 1.30am and 3am. But you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to work out that’s the drunks – and strangely enough it occurs close to pubs. But we [PSNI] employ a team of people to do it [statistically define problems]’ (I20).

This too was indicative of attitudes which officers believed to be held by PSNI managers in relation to the modern emphasis on the ‘products’ rather than the processes of problem solving. In a lengthy retort on this matter, this ‘modern obsession’ was part of a belief

‘that everything can be reduced to number crunching and measurement which were alright in the right places, but for something as sensitive and as culturally sensitive as policing, philosophical change [of the PSNI to a community policing model] cannot be met by performance indicators. And time and time again, you will see the current management team in place for policing in Northern Ireland talk about performance indicators and numbers, and the elevation of the status of police analysts and police psychologists are evidence of this new philosophy of number crunching...that which get measured, gets done, and that would be the policy. And what gets measured is what people *want* to get measured, and it’s a useful delaying and avoidance technique...it’s reduced a whole philosophy, all the work, all the good work of Shearing...to stark statistics’ (I61).

In terms of the ‘practical tools’ which gave effect to this output-based problem solving policy, a number of concerns were raised regarding PSNI’s reliance upon (and belief in) computerised, aggregated responses to crime problems. As the findings would suggest, the ‘closeness’ between organisational desires for objective analysis and response, with subjective, localised officer expertise in dealing with the sources of problems was somewhat distant. At a basic level, this ‘modern shift’ was illustrative of what was referred to as ‘bean-counting’ within the organisation. Indeed, a consequence of the ‘bean-counting’ policy for problem solving was the level of reliance upon a-contextual and ‘clinically’ produced data about community crime problems. With the statistical reasoning of risk management having trumped local, social and contextual explanations for crime fluctuations, neighbourhood officers essentially felt they had been ‘shown two fingers’ (I8). This was further perceived to be part the ‘curse’ of the ‘quick win’ mentality – short-termist management attitudes created through the risk management approach to problem (I26).

It must also be noted from the findings that senior officers often admitted that they lacked the knowledge to effectively work with electronic problem solving folders, with some even expressing a preference for older, paper-based systems of



recording the problem solving process for specific issues within their command area (I67). This was part of the general neighbourhood officer belief that in the face of the ever-growing reliance upon statistical and objective problem solving models, 'there can be too many of them [computer-based models] – it can be too high-fluting sometimes. You know, in my opinion, it's just better keeping it local' (I6). Though whatever the difficulties for the NPTs in employing their traditional problem solving methodologies, or the ambivalence of the management levels to the importance of *community*, rather than *computer*-based problem solving, it was interesting to note the response of one neighbourhood constable. In a profound statement about the implicit withdrawal of PSNI from 'traditional', community-centred problem solving:

'I think everything in policing goes in big circles, and it'll [problem solving] go way back to where you don't have those community in-roads and those relationships built up. And they'll [organisationally within PSNI] come back to neighbourhood policing because they'll realise 'what have we done, we've let slip and now we don't know anything or anybody'. So then we start again, and if they could just *see* the bigger picture in the first place without all this' (I25).

### 4.5.3 Problem Solving – Summary of Findings

- Problem solving as a key officer skill set, with neighbourhood officers as problem solvers – key to community policing;
- Problem solving about understanding the broader proactive, participatory and collective solutions to community issues, along with ‘seeing beyond’ crimes *per se* into social aspects of community issues;
- Informal working key to problem solving, combined with discretion – but currently discouraged with PSNI;
- Informal working with communities allows for alternative, efficient, non-police sanctions, with key community individuals vital for that process;
- Organisational culture within PSNI is merely to deal with symptoms of problems and not seek solutions;
- Less resources now available for labour intensive problem solving, therefore more emphasis required due to its importance;
- PSNI culturally expert and separate from the communities in which they work in regard to problem solving;
- PSNI attempting to formalise the informal, consensual policing necessary for problem solving, with more energy expended on this than actually solving the problem;
- Managerial ‘obsession’ of ‘want to know how’ undermining neighbourhood officer ‘know how’;
- Organisational drive to quantify all aspects of problem solving, with focus on demonstrating or producing ‘products’ of problem solving as claims that problems are being solved;
- Shift from subjective officer problem solving processes to objective managerial ‘products’;
- Major gap between problem solving as conducted by neighbourhood officers and problem solving as envisaged by PSNI managers;
- Gradual, but inevitable disconnection between police ‘problems’ and community ‘problems’.

## 4.6 Partnership

### 4.6.1 Subservience Model of Partnership

In terms of police ‘subservience’, or acceding to the needs of the community in which they serve, there was a clear acknowledgement from virtually all NPT responses that

‘we’re [neighbourhood officers] only here to support the people – but it’s the people, who if they want to change things, they’ll change it. The police aren’t going to do that...we’ll support them [the community], and *that’s* the way it should be’ (I31).

Indeed, dispelling any notions or aspirations as to ‘police led policing’ (characteristic of the RUC), and evidencing neighbourhood officer attitudes towards inclusive partnership approaches more generally, it was simply recognised that ‘you’re not going to police in a normal society without reliance on the community’ (I6).

Neighbourhood officers further noted that in working with the community as ‘partners’, their own role in preventing and detecting crime would be significantly attenuated if it were not for effective partnership at the local level insofar as:

‘it [community policing] wouldn’t work. It definitely wouldn’t work without them [the community]. If you can’t get people on board with you, to work along side you, then the neighbourhood part [of policing] doesn’t work, it doesn’t work. You don’t get anywhere, you don’t make any contacts, you don’t build up trust, you don’t build up relationships...’ (I25).

Police respondents were, however, able to make a clear distinction in regard to working with the community. Namely, that where partnership working between the police and the community was not effectively undertaken,

‘the problem is if they [partnerships] drop away then you’re back to a community of individuals, walking the streets...you’re not doing anything else, you don’t know what’s going on, you don’t know what they [community] need, what they want – there’s no information coming in’ (ibid.).

Another tenet relating to the ‘form’ of police-community partnerships was a need to engage in partnership in some form, no matter what the circumstances or will of the community. This was most clearly illustrated within the context of developing and tentative police-community relations within West Belfast. Officers firmly believed that partnerships should be struck up – even to stimulate a bare minimum of dialogue and communication (even if not widely desired with that community). As noted:

‘they’ve [named community group] got this guy in place, and I’m meeting him and I know it’s criticism, but it’s in a friendly atmosphere, and it brings the views of the Nationalist people who would have been in Nationalist [paramilitary] organisations if you know what I mean. But they’re now speaking to us face-to-face...which can only be a good thing – nobody’s trying to shoot us!’ (I14).

Though in building such a foundation for partnership working, whether in developed or developing areas of police-community interaction, the findings raised a number of further issues with regard to the ‘form’ of partnerships.

Firstly, from a community perspective and beyond informal partnerships with individual neighbourhood officers, when attempting to work in partnership with more senior PSNI ranks, it was perceived PSNI

‘pontificate about the complexity of linking people together. And the police are in that situation. I think the police are into the idea that working...with people is a complex, insurmountable task – it has to have a report 50 pages long [laughs]. I think we spend too much time doing that, trying to pontificate and make the thing almost impossible to not work before we actually think about how we might make it [partnership] work’ (I63).

A ‘side-effect’ of this perceived complexity was the fact that often partnerships of this nature, in spite of their intentions, failed to produce any visible outcome or product, or if they did, it took so long that agreed measures were either forgotten or had become obsolete (I49).

Secondly, it was perceived by NPTs and community groups that the understanding of what constituted effective partnership working at the community level within the higher ranks of PSNI was far from clear. As argued by one community respondent:

‘I think sometimes, they [police managers] are not aware...the idea of formalised meetings and partnerships once a month and things are almost a total waste of time...there needs to be a much more coherent approach...not just the idea of monthly meetings that puts sticky tape over things’ (I40).

In contrast, at the NPT level there were more innovative approaches to partnership working as an antidote to ‘one-dimensional’ perspective of the police managers on partnership approaches. Indeed, NPTs noted that effective partnership working consisted of *all* opportunities to meet the community – from lunch with community members in local cafes through to attending meetings on officers’ nights off. Thus, effective partnership working was felt to be communicating with *all* tiers of a community on *their* terms; with the people who matter; and across a range of issues which affect the community (I54; I26)

Thirdly, in regard to more innovative avenues of partnership ‘thinking’, a strong theme which emerged from the findings (again, more prevalent in the lower ranks of PSNI) was the need for officers in areas of developing police-community relations (such as West Belfast) to

‘push the boundaries of partnership working both in terms of how and with whom that partnership took place...the police organisation has to push boundaries...the opportunity is there and we would be severely mistaken if we didn’t try to push that door open’ (I29).

As an example of such innovative ‘door pushing’, ‘Pizza and Peelers’ was cited as ‘ground-breaking’ police partnership with a Catholic secondary school in West Belfast. As a means for neighbourhood officers to sit informally with school children and teachers (and literally eat pizza) who hitherto would never have engaged with police, it was about a partnership approach which also allowed officers to break down barriers:

‘because we always find that some people see the police and they don’t know whether...to approach you or not. Because obviously some people don’t like the police. So when you see them [police] in a different light...those sorts of things work’ (I12).

This was clearly part of the general drive by NPTs across East and West Belfast in that ‘we’ve some people in certain areas who still won’t speak to us. There’s certain

tensions there, but we try to access them via other means...and through some of the other contacts...' (I28).

From a broader perspective on police-community partnerships, it was evident that officers needed to recognise working within communities often pivoted upon the natural 'order' and availability of key groups and individuals, as 'gateways' to the smaller and less recognisable groups via a 'domino effect'. As illustrated by one neighbourhood officer in West Belfast, some of the progress in developing partnerships with 'hard-to-reach' Republican communities

'all developed from a community group in Poleglass – [name], they came on board and basically helped us to integrate and endorse what we were doing. So that was the first take-off. Then it [partnership working] gradually moved into various residents' groups, residents' associations...and we now regularly sit those various groups in Poleglass and Twinbrook to discuss local issues' (I9).

With effective partnership working premised upon building up networks of partnerships within a community from the ground up (I54; I24), this 'domino' approach to partnership was further viewed as an effective 'antidote' to formal approaches because of the fact there are

'a plethora of groups in the community that perhaps aren't being touched... so there's a wealth of skills and competencies and knowledge that isn't being touched upon because there's too narrow a focus. Policing with the Community is focused on community officers getting in at the local level to the community, and then at the higher, the District Commander...what are they doing, how can they affect the process? (I17).

It was also cautioned that officers should avoid becoming overwhelmed with being in partnership with 'everyone' because of the potential for counterproductive and competing interests. Thus, a vital objective for partnership working was the targeting of groups and organisations in a way that would maximise police resources *and* reach into the community (I5). In this regard, officers felt 'partnership overload' did have a natural 'balance' in that community infrastructures were in fact

'quite sophisticated, the community groups. They've very advanced structures...I mean, they know how to change things, to create change...I think to them, no doubt we're [NPTs] just another contact for them. I

wouldn't get any big ideas about myself; we're just another method that they use to improve their community' (I10).

Finally, taking a broad overview of the subservient model to partnership, an essential element was the ability of police to engage in partnerships which allowed access into the social fabric of the community in which they worked. As argued by an officer from the Policing with the Community Branch, this began with initially

'more community engagement by the neighbourhood officers...but to do that the police *have* to be prepared to sit on things which aren't 100% 'policey', and it has to be ethical, but you were maybe asked [as a NPT] 'our community as a whole...we need a grant for something, a play park', whatever...' (I62).

Though beyond some of the issues which have emerged in relation to the physical and practical aspects of police-community partnerships, a number of more subtle themes embedded in social issues also emerged from the findings. Indeed, there were strong attitudes in relation to the 'individual' interactions between officers and groups, and the potential impact that had on the functioning of partnerships. Firstly, both officers and community groups recognised the

'need to *build* relationships, [and] that it's not just walking into a community centre. It takes time to establish a relationship, and you need to work on it. It's like a marriage, you need to continually work at it. And sometimes it doesn't work' (I41).

Secondly, like any 'marriage', the personalities of the 'partners' also had a significant influence upon the effectiveness of the partnership working. This was most clearly demonstrated by an officer who noted

'you can pretty much make headway solving problems if it's a good partnership. And it just depends: if partnerships are set up and people are dedicated, you'll make great headway. Some people enter into these things and realise there's a bit of work for them and slide out the back door...but if you can get the right attitude and the right people, you can make a difference' (I27).

From within the PSNI itself, neighbourhood officers were cognisant of the long-term nature of partnership building within communities. As perceived even by a relatively inexperienced neighbourhood officer,

‘it takes a long time to get into an areas and get well known...I think it’s slow to get going, because it takes years, not months to work, to get partnerships up and running effectively – it’s a long slow process’ (I22).

Thus, the findings would indicate that effective partnership working is not a managerial ‘standard’ to be neatly categorised or ‘box-ticked’. This was, however, noted to be incompatible with the PSNI’s current emphasis in that

‘you’ve [PSNI] got the issues of resource allocation, and we’re cutting back. And [it’s the attitude of] ‘do we need to be sitting on all those partnerships?’ But once we start looking at what we get out of it [partnerships], you’re into bean counting and the corporate side – it’s ‘how do we measure that?’ And if on a scale of one to ten you can’t say what you’ve got of it, you can’t fill in that form or tick a box...they [managers] don’t like that’ (I62).

Returning to the notion of formality, it was widely recognised that partnerships operated more efficiently outside of the rigid and mechanical formal approaches. With informal meetings as an effective means for officers and communities to mesh and integrate on mutual terms:

‘the likes of [officer] and [officer], the informal partnerships work really well and we get a lot of benefits from each other [at the community level]. The more official partnerships...not worth a toss...on the ground, not worth a toss. I’m just being honest. I’ll tell you, see if there’s anything with Belfast City Council in it, I can tell you it’ll be a nice day out and nice lunch, and a total waste of time...We’ve a Community Safety Team, and they’re all talking pie charts and graphs. The only way they become involved is if *we* pass the information onto *them*...it’s a cottage industry, full of people who don’t want to go out on the street and get involved in community policing’ (I26).

Unfortunately, due to both organisational pressures on resources and staff turnover within the NPTs due to Patten Severance, many of these informal partnerships (which in some case were with central community groups within communities and provided a link to virtually an entire community) pivoted upon the relationships and personality of a *single* officer. Indeed, this issue was most strongly



illustrated within West Belfast. As profoundly stated by a central Republican group at the helm of developing PSNI-community relations within the new political dispensation:

‘here’s the thing, we built up a personal relationship with [Inspector], a professional one that we felt confident to speak to residents’ groups and say we’ve spoken to this guy and have faith in him...But then we’re in a situation now where they’re [PSNI] moving him on. So for the first time in history that I certainly know in Nationalist areas, is that we’ve got a community group with a big influence in the community in terms of respect for our organisation. We’re saying you need to engage with the police, and they’re [the community] sceptical, but we’re convincing them. And then they police, what do they do? They come in and move the main person on which is just madness! It’s just a disaster! And then again for the first time in history you have a Nationalist/Republican group actively lobbying the PSNI to keep someone in place – we’re lobbying them and saying ‘are you mad?’ (I52).

In many cases, such a movement towards new partnerships was about the ‘politics of trust’ rather than merely meeting around a table. In this regard, partnership working was just as much about the PSNI demonstrating to communities what they were moving away from (in terms of the contested nature of policing in the past), and what they were moving towards (in terms of partnership working/community policing). As stated by one group:

‘I find that trust building – how quick do they want to change themselves? Have they [PSNI] changed? Because I don’t know that the police have changed themselves...’ (I65).

As the findings would indicate, where the police can build partnerships which are both cognisant of, and responsive to, community needs it can sustain trust even in hard to reach community environments (I12; I32). Thus, as a ‘lesson’ to police and communities in building such partnership approaches:

‘I see every mechanism...that involves partnerships [with PSNI] being of incredible use to communities. They [PSNI] bring a lot of expertise, resources, ideas...and I also think sometimes you’ll have a lot of people [in PSNI] who haven’t actually worked *in* the community. I think it’ll be like a dose of salts to them – the communities can say this how it is, this is what real life is like...a reality check, and these are what the real needs are and how we can address these’ (I58).

### 4.6.2 Separation Model of Partnership

Grounded in the social and political issues of policing and the conflict, it was deemed to be a basic ‘fact’ in Northern Ireland that

‘it doesn’t matter if there’s a Harp and Crown outside the station, or there’s a PSNI or Garda badge...there will always be an element of society who are against the police...’ (I16).

Indeed, it is set against this context that a number of the more subtle and nuanced findings with regard to ‘separatist’ conceptions of police-community partnership may be evidenced – both in terms of the organisational and social influences which characterise separatist aspects to police/community partnership in Northern Ireland.

From a broad perspective, a major contributor to the sense of distinction between the PSNI and communities was a community perception of PSNI attitudes and willingness to work in partnership at the local level, described very much as a ‘work in progress’. From basic recruit training through to senior officer attitudes, there was a clear message from community respondents that ‘the police still have a whole lot of learning – we’re [communities and PSNI] coming out of the Troubles...it is how they speak to people, how they interact’ (I50). Thus, as part of the police learning ‘to come out of the bunkers’, it was generally recognised by NPTs themselves that within PSNI (and in spite of PSNI claims to be a community-oriented service),

‘you cannot meet people and speak to people if you are in the back of an armoured car or in the back of an armoured land rover...it has developed from that...but even in the armoured cars there’s still a barrier’ (I6).

As neatly summarised by a large Loyalist Community Organisation (LCO) in regard to the palpable ‘separateness’ between PSNI and communities within the sample areas:

‘bear in mind we’re [communities] coming out of conflict, and communities aren’t the only ones coming out conflict. Police are coming out of conflict too. They had their sort of prejudices, as do working class people...they need to re-adjust their patterns of thought...we are coming out of a very dark place where there is still an awful lot of hurt and pain...we all have to make an effort to break out of that cocoon’ (I1).

It was also evident that beyond some of these contextual and historically ‘markers’ of police-community distinction, contemporary attitudes within PSNI still appeared to influence the ‘operationalisation’ of partnerships with those in the community who were previously ‘on the margins’. On one level, community respondents in both East and West Belfast believed that

‘there’s still an element of resistance [to co-operation] which exists within the police...I’ve heard it from very senior officers that dealing on a community level actually demoralises the police service because there is a school of thought that the police shouldn’t be getting into bed, as it were, with people at the community level, for all sorts of different reasons’ (I1).

Though far from this assertion as a mere community ‘gripe’, this was confirmed from within PSNI (although aimed mainly at the managerial ranks). In reference (and in contrast) to ‘best practice’ on police-community partnerships gained by an officer through exchanges with the NYPD as part of RUC changes under Patten, it was noted by the senior officer that

‘they [NYPD] are engaging directly, evolving productive partnerships...as one of those methods...working as equal partners. And *that* is the bridge too far for the old, recalcitrant elements within the police’ (I61).

This attitude was further highlighted by another officer whose community policing/partnership working within the Republican Markets area of South Belfast had actually been highlighted as best practice in the Patten Report (1999:42). Noting the organisational attitudes to forming partnerships anew, it was the ‘internal politics’ of attempting new and innovative engagement which dictated who *could* be engaged with, as opposed to who *needed* to be engaged in effective partnership arrangements (I33).

Another facet to the separation thesis was the direction given through leadership within PSNI. While the importance of individual officer relations to partnership working has already been highlighted, this appeared to be the exception (limited to the NPTs) rather than the rule of working (throughout the PSNI). In reference to one of the recent police commanders within East Belfast, an LCO noted the detrimental impact of poor ‘leadership signals’ to partnership approaches. As illustrated in their response:

‘whenever [named commander] was in charge, we kind of felt there was hostility there towards engagement with the community. Nobody in [community organisation] felt he was one jot interested in engaging, and he sometimes *had* to...it was almost like going through the motions’ (I48).

On the one hand, this was interpreted by NPTs themselves as the PSNI’s ‘cultural myopia’ which restricted police management’s ability to see beyond the background of individuals within communities (to work in partnership) rather than the potential ‘value’ their participation could add (I7). On the other hand, the ‘divide’ between upper and lower officer levels in PSNI was reinforced by a community group who felt a distinct difficulty was actually ‘building up trust outside the wider circle of [named Inspector] and his team. The top brass are maybe going to be saying ‘where did that come from [working with us]?’ (I52).

On a practical level, the separation thesis to partnership working was further compounded by two key issues within PSNI: resourcing constraints and NPT abstractions. In reference to the former, the reduced officer numbers within PSNI combined with the increased pressures and demands created through the ‘new’ Republican/Nationalist demand for policing left one officer noting that

‘I’ll be perfectly honest, I think we’ve had a massive failing with the resourcing issue...our bosses *knew* that this [political dispensation] was coming for quite a while, that this new political arena was coming, and the community interaction and the increase in that. But we’re doing exactly the same now with the same numbers, we’re doing this job now which is ten fold what it was year ago [prior to Sinn Fein’s acceptance of PSNI]. We have the same number of officers. So their capacity to effectively do the job for an area crying out now for policing and community policing and interaction with the neighbourhood police... [pauses and shakes head]’ (I9).

In reference to abstractions, because of reduced resources within PSNI more generally, the NPTs (as the partnership link to communities) were constantly abstracted from their neighbourhood role. With the vast majority of NPTs describing themselves as the organisational ‘polyfiller’ (I16), they were the *primary* resource used to fill the duties of other sections due to sickness and shortage. As experienced first hand by the author during the fieldwork in one police station, a number of neighbourhood officers had to cancel a long-planned meeting with a community

group merely to stand and guard the electric gates of the police station which had failed. However, abstractions were far from one off incidents because

‘there are various times when other duties take priority and you are pulled out for two or three weeks and it does make a big impact...we would be taken out of a lot of community-based, normal [NPT] roles...and it’s such a big difference when you try to get back in [to the community]’ (I25).

In the most extreme case encountered, one Sergeant was exasperated that officer shortages in other sections of their command area had resulted in his neighbourhood officers being taken out of their beat area for over six weeks. As cynically noted, such an abstraction policy was

‘absolutely accepted...the beats are off at the moment because we’re being used for other things at the minute. There’s sections to be filled and we haven’t done a beat in a month-and-a-half...neighbourhood is looked upon as ‘there’s six, eight, ten in neighbourhood and we need two people to fill a section that day, you get pulled...*every single day* there’s extractions for something’ (I7).

Even in spite of the desire by the NIPB under the 2008-11 Policing Plan to have the NPTs ‘ring fenced’ to allow them to carry out their neighbourhood duties in an uninterrupted fashion *and* to build partnerships with communities, another neighbourhood Sergeant wearily stated that

‘I’ve been told...the neighbourhood core will be ring fenced and that 80% of neighbourhood’s time will just be for neighbourhood duties. Unfortunately, I’ve heard that several times over the years and that’s never been achieved, and it’s unachievable as far as I’m concerned. They’re [NPTs] bottom of the pile’ (I22).

Thus, far from the NPTs being given the time and resources to form mutually beneficially partnerships within communities, it was apparent across East and West Belfast that the NPT role had shifted from a pro-active relationship building (conducive to partnership working) towards one of a reactive, ‘fire-fighting’ role (I58; I61). And in combination with the rapid officer turnover due to Patten severance, which resulted in community groups being ‘allocated’ up to ten different neighbourhood officers since 2001 (I43), it left community respondents feeling that

beyond individual officer relationships, partnership working in its true sense was non-existent:

‘we used to have the bobbies on the beat and we knew who they were and they knew who we were. Now that isn’t the case – there’s just people responding to incidents with no local knowledge...you build up a relationship with one [officer] and it’s like, ‘he’s moved on’...that’s happened three times now...it’s difficult to build up a relationship’ (I59).

Away from organisational issues *per se* within PSNI and their contribution to the separation model of community partnership working, the findings also uncovered a number of socio-political factors which fed into the separation thesis of police-community partnerships. At the macro societal level, in spite of the speed with which police reform had occurred since Patten, community attitudes to working with the PSNI (at least in Republican areas) were felt to be changing at a different (and reduced) rate. From a PSNI perspective, it was emphasised that

‘lets face it, over the last 30-odd years, *how* we policed – if I was a member of the Nationalist community, you know, in certain areas where I’ve policed and seen things that have happened, I don’t think I’d be too fussed on the police either – that’s on [tape recorder] [laughs]? You know what I mean’ (I33).

Across both Loyalist and Republican communities, officers with experience of policing during the Troubles intimated that

‘we need to come back to the politics of Northern Ireland, not be naive about the fact that people in these communities did not have permission from the politicians or the bully boys [paramilitaries] to do that, and that was in Loyalist areas as well, the bottom of the Shankill, hard Loyalist places...those communities did not have permission to engage where police were concerned...’ (I66).

Thus, with communities themselves acutely aware of the legacy of the Troubles and the attitudes it engendered towards policing, at the human level it was aptly noted by an RCO that

‘they [PSNI] expect us to be buddies with them now? But they chased us up and down this road and knocked our pans in and shot us, and they expect us to be friends and everything alright?’ (I58).

As part of the ‘political’ constraints restricting police partnerships within such ‘hard to reach’ communities, it was also argued by a number of senior officers that there had always been an implicit recognition by the Government as to such cultural and social ‘separateness’ of communities from the police more generally. Through the Northern Ireland Office’s Criminal Justice Review of 2000 (following Patten) which set up Community Safety Partnerships in every council area, it was argued the Government had deliberately created a ‘two-tier’ partnership approach so as to ‘manage’ the lack of (willingness for) effective engagement and partnership with the estranged Republican (and to a lesser extent Loyalist) communities. In perpetuating the ‘separateness’ between the PSNI and (mainly) Republican communities:

‘one of our biggest failings I think also was that for some reason the State launched two separate philosophies – Patten’s ‘Policing with the Community’, and the NIO in the promotion of community safety, which are, when you scrape away the bits and pieces, they’re doing the same thing’ (I66).

Though as proffered by another senior officer,

‘there was a reason why the two structures were set in place. And the reason is that the DPPs [as police structures] would have alienated the Republican community, so they *had* to set up another mechanism in place whereby Republican communities felt confident and could come forward to a statutory body...the Community Safety Partnership was set up to have a mechanism whereby hard to reach communities could engage on *policing* issues, but not directly with the *police*’ (I32).

From the responses, this was indicative of NIO and PSNI attitudes which eschewed *real* partnership working – in part because it used security issues as an excuse not to engage with the ‘edges of society’. Though in this regard, it was proposed by a DPP member that ‘as Patten said, for too long, the Troubles were used as an excuse for not establishing that high level of community contact’ (I35).

The findings also uncovered that beneath the social and political veneers of police and community ‘separateness’, paramilitaries still exerted a great influence upon (potential) partnership working with PSNI across the sample areas. In what was often a sensitive question for respondents, the reality of this influence which

undoubtedly restricted overt participation in police-community partnerships in certain areas was summarily described by one group:

‘I would say every area is the same, every estate has got the paramilitary influence...and the politicians...and the bosses in the PSNI are burying their heads. I live in a Loyalist working class area, and it hasn’t changed a bit, and if anything, it has got worse. You know, the guys [paramilitaries] are like the Sopranos, seriously, it’s ridiculous. If you touch one of them that’s it. So if anyone says has the peace process done anything, we say no. This paramilitary influence has been brushed under the carpet by politicians, and the police don’t deal with it and it’s business as usual – and in some areas even being seen talking to the police is still considered informing’ (I45).

Finally, it is important to highlight the community perceptions of PSNI within the context of the separation model. In East Belfast, with the end of the RUC as a ‘Protestant police force for a Protestant people’ (as it was often described), officers sensed that many in Loyalist/Unionist East Belfast no longer saw them as ‘their’ police service; and in some instances, it was perceived that communities had a greater respect for former RUC officers still serving in PSNI as ‘theirs’, rather than the ‘new breed’ of purely PSNI (I63; I25). And in West Belfast, community respondents expressed both political *and* social disengagement from PSNI in terms of class and background, which laterally affected mutual partnership working. It was noted in this regard that ‘the vast majority of police men coming into these [Republican] communities don’t live here, and I’m not sure they really understand the communities that they’re working in’ (I53). Such sentiment was summarised in the comment of one RCO insofar as

‘they’re [PSNI] certainly removed and aloof from this community, and for as much as they’re trying...it’s about understanding *where* we are as a community and what makes us tick, instead of some middle class fucking asshole from Bangor having expectations of us as a community and our kids that we would never aspire to and achieve – and *that’s* the problem’ (I54).

In overview of the findings on the separatist model of partnership between the PSNI and communities in the sample areas, it is clear that partnership working by PSNI is not so much restricted by deliberate and wilful attempts to remain disengaged from communities and their organisations. Rather, it is the less than proactive, passive approach to partnership within the managerial levels which has



failed to address resourcing issues or provide direction and leadership on effective community partnership working. However, there was at least a veiled glimmer of hope for the future of partnership development between the PSNI and communities within the sample areas. As remarked by one senior officer:

‘I think there was probably a time where there was absolutely a community of police officers who sub-culturally were very old-school, and it was apparent it [being in partnership with certain communities] was dancing with the devil, engaging with the abuser. Police officers looked at it that way, as did the communities – but I think that it’s changing’ (I66).

### **4.6.3 Partnerships – Summary of Findings**

- Partnerships as a keystone for community policing and essential for effective community policing;
- Officers can not conduct community policing effectively without proactive partnerships/can not work with communities of individuals;
- Partnership vital in all community contexts, even within the hardest-to-reach areas;
- An organisational culture of bureaucracy and complexity to partnership working with communities which makes them ineffective;
- Need for flexibility, innovation and dedication of officers to local partnerships which can push boundaries and seek out new partners;
- Partnerships between police and communities need to work through natural community hierarchies to gain right people and avoid being overwhelmed with partnerships;
- Effective partnership working allows officers access into the social fabric of communities;
- Organisationally, PSNI are only interested in partnerships which tick boxes or contribute to PSNI agendas/not community oriented;
- Many police partnerships between PSNI and entire areas pivot upon a single officer;
- No affinity between communities and PSNI for partnerships in certain areas due to cultural differences engendered by the conflict;
- PSNI organisationally unwilling to engage with certain community organisations and actors, with the politics of who PSNI ‘should’ rather than ‘could’ engage with over-riding partnership considerations;
- No organisational attempts to support partnership working at the NPT level due to abstractions and lack of ‘ring-fencing’ of officers;
- Partnership working with PSNI management only about managing the ‘image’ of the partnership, with no interest in genuine engagement;

- Paramilitaries still wield power in areas where PSNI fail to pursue genuine partnership agenda.

## **4.7 Service Delivery**

### **4.7.1 Organisational Pressures on Service Delivery**

In respect of PSNI's 'Policing with the Community' policy, at the management levels the emphasis on the delivery of a community-oriented service was evident from the responses. With the concept of service delivery as the 'visible' or 'working face' of the other community policing components, effective service delivery was about

'solving crime and developing partnerships, engaging with people and most importantly, about getting it [service delivered] right the first time, creating the right impressions...to market neighbourhood officer as their [community] police officers' (I29).

However, beyond this aspirational vision as to the delivery of a community-oriented policing service, there are a number of issues from the field which shall now be explored in more detail.

Firstly, officers generally tended to view the internal workings of, and management attitudes to, the delivery of a uniform, community-oriented service as something less than supportive. In regard to the more general delivery of Patten's vision of community policing, a common perception was that

'there's a huge gap coming now – but really, who's dictating it [delivery of community policing]? At the end of the day, we're supposed to be following Patten recommendations. We had the Oversight Commissioner last year, and bang! Look what's happened, it's all moving away from community policing' (I28).

Indicative of more widespread discontent with the managerial attitudes and emphasis on the delivery of Patten's core, it was a common perception that Policing with the Community did not go 'through the entire organisation, and it needs to. We need to get away from...response-type policing, and there are those [with PSNI] who are still very much in that [response] frame of mind' (I36).

Officers freely admitted (and argued) that community policing was neither the predominant style of police as internalised within PSNI culture, nor as delivered

on the ground. Such ambiguity with regard to the place of community policing therefore left officers to suggest they were

‘trying to ride two policing styles [community policing and response] without really investing in one. And that’s the big challenge, and we’ve got to look at ways and spell out what Policing with the Community is...I think they’ve got to make it clear it’s a role for everybody’ (I17).

In this vein, it was further argued by one long serving Sergeant, privy to management meetings on the implementation of ‘Policing with the Community’ policy:

‘they have a concept which they are trying to sell at the minute from head quarters...they say all officers are neighbourhood officers – but the reality of it is that’s not right. And you’re trying to fool the public by selling them something that isn’t going to happen’ (I20).

On the one hand, part of the problem was felt to rest with the way in which the concept was ‘operationalised’. With the senior ranks seemingly caught up at the nebulous level of policy and strategy, it blurred the communication of what effective community policing should look like and could be delivered on the front line (10EBVCS) – amusingly described as ‘chinese whispers’. With a firm belief that the community policing policy was in fact removed from the realities (and necessities) of policing on the ground, dictates became distorted by the time they reached the front line of service delivery in terms of how they could be made ‘workable’ (I17). Conversely from a community perspective, it was articulated that

‘I believe they [NPTs] are committed to what has to be done. The problem is you’re talking about officers of the rank of senior constable or sergeant. By the time *their* stuff gets sent up to head quarters, they’re so busy up there doing whatever it is they do, that it never actually permeates through [the service communities demand]’ (I2).

On the other hand, the findings evidenced that such problems were compounded by the lack of NIPB or DPP commitment to any definitive conception of what community policing ‘as delivered’ should look like. Thus, it left the two policing bodies ‘holding the service to account for these high level strategic issues, but they’re not taking any cognisance of what factors and the key issues the community want’ (I29).

More generally, neighbourhood officers consistently noted their ability to deliver a community service was stretched to breaking point on a regular, daily basis. As stated by one neighbourhood constable:

‘neighbourhood policing we’re in, but we only do neighbourhood policing about 10% of the time...you’re used as a jack of all trades – we do everything...it’s an issue of resources, so you maybe only get two hours out of your eight to do neighbourhood policing and then you do other things which they [management] classify as more important’ (I14).

On another level, the NPTs held that the delivery of community policing was purely down to the will and commitment of the individual officer, and not because of organisational (resources) support for them. As succinctly observed by a DPP member,

‘I think while the men at Sergeant level are very keen to see effective neighbourhood policing, I think a lot of the commitment is being diluted because there is no practical example in terms of providing resources; no practical example of the men from Chief Inspector up committing themselves and showing where their money is – the money isn’t where their mouth is’ (I34).

The second broad area related to the delivery of community policing may be viewed as the ‘cumulative product’ of management deficiencies and resourcing support for the delivery of community policing. Indeed, it was felt by many officers that to deliver an effective community policing service, it needed to be considered as a ‘craft’, underpinned by a variety of social, cultural and ‘life’ skills not readily learned from a textbook or training workbook. Thus, in comparison to response policing which neighbourhood officers felt to be little more than glorified ‘crime recording’ (I66), the delivery of community policing required specialist skill sets which needed to be developed and used in conjunction with local knowledge and discretion. However, the findings evidenced that the managerial ‘favouritism’ for quantifiable, targeted performance had eroded the use of such skills and officer discretion to the extent officers felt their hand was being forced in terms of what they were ‘allowed’ to deliver within their areas (I8). In the face of such pressure officers felt their ‘right’ to use discretion had almost entirely been replaced by ‘targeted persecution’ within communities to meet targets – antithetical to neighbourhood

officer wisdom that discretion was a key weapon in delivering a service which won the respect *and* co-operation of communities (ibid.).

Having explored community policing with regard to internal issues affecting its delivery, it is now important to examine the external pressures which influence the delivery of ‘Policing with the Community’ more generally. It must be noted that the constant, pervasive pressure to ‘box-tick’ and meet performance targets (rather community needs) was indicative of the way in which the Patten reforms themselves had been managed. This was explained by one senior officer who believed that the implementation of Patten

‘crucially, critically, reduced much of the good work, the emphasis on good practice in to a series of tick boxes and this emphasis and over-emphasis on performance indicators. And in doing so corrupted the whole process [of community policing] from being what the likes of Trojanowicz talked about, this systematic change, cultural change, this heart-led change, a paradigmatic change. It reduced to what practitioners and bureaucrats saw was an easy way...’ (I61).

Thus, with the findings clearly denoting the post-Patten ‘excel-culture’ as heavily influencing the delivery of the policing, a further issue raised was at *what* level and *how* precisely such targets were being formulated. As stated:

‘part of the problem is *where* police targets are set. Now a lot of those targets are set from the top, down. A number are set by the NIO and then a number at force level. And while it takes account of data the police hold, that is only partial. And how reflective that is of local policing is something else’ (I17).

This issue was reinforced in the comments of another senior officer who stated:

‘Hugh Orde brought this performance culture in after Flannigan, and said this [delivery of policing] is all about performance and officers are accountable for what they do. I mean lets be clear, the notion that [pauses] and I agree with something you’ve [interviewer] written recently – the notion that the community or society in any shape or form drive the policing agenda is a fallacy. By and large the police drive it. It’s that master of illusion thing, it’s about ‘we drive it and create the illusion’ (I66).

In overview, it is clear that the lack of resources afforded to the community policing in combination with target-driven performance culture has ‘neutered’ its

delivery to something less than community-driven. To summarise the resourcing issue and its effect on the service delivered, a frustrated DPP member stated:

‘when your Chief Constable says you’re not under resourced, and you district commander says you aren’t under resourced...it undermines the argument for the neighbourhood police officer who *knows* he is under resourced. You’re never going to get a truthful ‘yeah, we need more people if we’re going to do this [community policing] effectively’. But that’s official policy’ (I35).

Furthermore, in terms of the impact that ‘bean counting’ had at the individual officer level, it actually *decreased* the efficiency with which policing was delivered at the local level. As explained:

‘I think to individually count what people do is de-motivating, because to be at the top, you need to do so much work it’s astronomical. To be at the bottom, you’ll probably lose your job. So what does everyone do? They slide along in the middle – it’s human nature. So that kind of measuring *promotes* mediocrity’ (I27).

The findings also revealed that within the context of rising demand for a policing service within the new political dispensation, the resourcing/target culture effect doubly impacted upon the work of the NPTs. Firstly, because the work of neighbourhood officers was seen to be much more ‘relationship intensive’ than their response-policing counterparts, when NPTs were diverted from the delivery of local community policing, it was felt to relay a message to the community that it was *their* officers that were being taken away – further diminishing community affinity with the police in their area (I34). Secondly, neighbourhood Sergeants and Inspectors were generally in agreement that they were no longer ‘in control’ of the local service delivered within their area due to hierarchical target culture (I27; I33).

Thus, even when targets were achieved, it was a ‘zero-sum’ game in that

‘if you are proactive in preventing crime [as a neighbourhood unit], it means there’s no crime in your area so you lose your resources. So the whole thing is a vicious circle’ (I26).

And with seemingly everyone *except* PSNI managers aware of the limitations placed upon, and the damaging effects of such restrictions (as outlined above) upon the



delivery of an effective community policing model, it was an objective observation by a DPP member that

‘there are a few individuals [within PSNI] who stand out because of their commitment. But they [PSNI] give me the impression that there are not enough of them first of all. And secondly, they’re giving me the impression that the neighbourhood teams, as Patten envisaged them and the principles that underpin those teams – I’m convinced in terms of resources and in terms of management commitment, a lot more could be achieved...I know there’s a will on the part of the man on the beat as envisaged by Patten, but it’s *all* about paper policing at the minute’ (I34).

### 4.7.2 Public Realities of Service Delivery

Moving beyond the immediate organisational issues affecting the delivery of community policing, the findings indicated that the public reality (or social context) in which a policing is delivered was equally influential. In regard to the public realities of service delivery, it was a recurring theme from community respondents that the policing service, as delivered must be focused upon

‘the indigenous people. They’ve got all the detail, all the faces – they know who’s involved in what and where it happens, they know when it happens, whose directing it. And that goes from underage drinking right up to organised criminal gangs, drug dealers and all. You [PSNI] gotta work with local people...if we’re not part of the equation, then there’s not going to be any result’ (I54).

Thus, the delivery of a policing service was as much about police understanding that their role could not be a solitary one, as much as it was about the willingness of communities to assist with that service.

However, it was clear from the field that the ‘abnormal’ (conflict related) context of the sample areas limited the extent to which the police could deliver a ‘normal’ service – and indeed the level of service the PSNI were ‘allowed’ to undertake with communities. As illustrated by one officer working in a Loyalist area of East Belfast:

‘there are *still* some areas I wouldn’t go into. It’s not as rosy as it’s made out to be, the picture that’s presented outside of policing...there’s some Loyalist areas that *during the day* I wouldn’t walk down on my own because you know [as a police officer] you’re not safe. It’s not as flowered as it actually is on the news where they tell you there’s peace’ (I28).

And with such restrictions on the delivery of a ‘normal’ police service firmly grounded in the vestiges of the conflict, the findings would indicate that effective service delivery is as much about the PSNI attempting to win over the ‘hearts and minds’ of communities as it is about catching criminals.

It was also clear from the NPT perspective that the process of winning ‘hearts and minds’ began with a ‘bottom-up’ approach in terms of working from the individual up to the community level to build trust and confidence (I27). Thus, it

was only when such trust at the officer/individual community level began to grow that officers could ‘prove’ within their beats they delivered ‘effective, impartial, non-political and non-partisan policing...a modern day policing service. People need to see effective policing, then they will co-operate’ (I42). The findings also demonstrated that in order to effect such co-operation, it was necessary that the service provided started with ‘getting the basics right’. Illustrated by an LCO, as symptomatic of the lack of ‘basics’ within PSNI:

‘I’ve rung up sometimes and asked to speak to [well known neighbourhood officer], and they’ll go ‘who’s he?’ You know, you’re kind of going ‘what’s happening in this place?’ They sending the likes of [officer] as an ambassador, and there’s some ill-informed person sitting on the desk who hasn’t even heard of them. It’s just wrong’ (I48).

Furthermore, to build confidence in communities officers needed to be prepared to ‘compromise’ on the service they were delivering, especially in view of the pre-existing non-state ‘policing’ capacities within sample areas. This point was reinforced by one RCO in West Belfast. In reference to a public order situation:

‘the cops were on their way to the scene – we [community group] know we had it three quarters settled, and their [PSNI] arrival would have inflamed the whole thing because it would have been like ‘who phoned the cops? What are they doing here? Bastards!’ So we got the guy...to re-contact the police and ask them to call the police off...we were able to get it [public order situation] resolved and things quietened down’ (I54).

The potentially negative impacts of poor service (or adverse encounters with PSNI) were also stark. In a historical sense, it was understandable that both Loyalist and Republican communities were naturally apprehensive about the PSNI because for many, past experiences had been limited to the fact

‘sometimes, the only time people saw them [police] was when they were kicking the door in and beating them over the head with a baton...that’s still to be overcome...that view and that perspective of police’ (I42).

This reinforced the need for PSNI in the present to provide an effective service in the first instance to ameliorate such ‘learned experiences’. However, it appeared that the reality of the service ‘experience’ delivered from the community perspective was somewhat lacking. As generally perceived across the sample areas:

‘I have to say, I fear for the type and style of policing we’re going to get, I do. Because there’s all those young bloods coming out of training and doing their two years probation and they’ve fucking legislation up to here! They pull out of areas if people throw a bit of muck at them under Health and Safety legislation. How’s that policing an area?’ (I54).

Indeed, it is the *perceived* effects such encounters have upon the tight-knit communities of the sample areas which is of importance to the public realities of service delivery.

At least in East Belfast, there was an alarming attitude to the service delivered by PSNI at the community level. In regard to the comments of a central community group:

‘I don’t think people have expectations of the police, which is the unfortunate thing. I think it’s [policing service] so bad, they don’t expect the police to respond, and I think that’s very dangerous – they genuinely don’t expect the police to do much...people just don’t believe it because they haven’t seen it [policing] with their own eyes’ (I48).

It was therefore no surprise that in view of Northern Ireland’s history of ‘paramilitary policing’, and in combination with the perceived lack of policing by PSNI (as above), a local paramilitary response to crime was *still* viewed to be a viable alternative to the PSNI. This was highlighted by an East Belfast politician insofar as the (community) driver for using paramilitaries was

‘a community crying out for proper policing...and that’s evidenced by the number of people that come into my office asking for help...really when they come here, it’s a covert way of saying, or an implied way of saying ‘we want the paramilitaries to sort this...and we’ve found a real increase in the numbers of people coming here, and in some cases referred here by the PSNI’ (I2).

In West Belfast too, it was clear at the community level that not only had the PSNI failed to provide an effective policing service within the new political dispensation, but the service was so poor that it could not effectively ‘fill the gap’ historically provided by the paramilitaries. As bluntly stated,

‘the real issues of community policing were swept aside during the reforms, and now you’re starting to see the seeds of that in West Belfast. It’s a combination of two things: policing being non-existent in the area; and the

Provos [PIRA] taking the decision to go down the peace walk. And now the gap [in policing] is there, a vacuum for people to behave in whatever way they want. They [PSNI] did miss the boat in that regard' (I59).

And as summarily noted, the public reality (and necessity) to the delivery of effective community policing is the PSNI

'starting to think about *society*...I think you're [PSNI] missing the point of how you start to deal with criminality in society...look at its context as opposed to looking at it [community policing] as just about four officers walking up and down the Falls – that's not policing, that's only patrolling, and that's not *policing*' (I51).

Exploring the findings from a more practical orientation, there were a number of issues which had a resonance with operational aspects to an effective community-oriented policing service. At a basic level, community respondents overwhelmingly agreed they were receiving a reduced, rather than improved community policing service in the post-Patten era. As generally perceived across East and West Belfast:

'I think that people generally are expecting more of a delivery on the ground...I know there are occasions when people have contacted the police and made the police aware of incidents and they haven't responded. I know of situations of crimes that people have made the police aware of and there seemed to be a lack of interest. People [in the community] would say the police don't police effectively' (I42).

In part, such problems had their genesis in the resourcing issue, which, as the findings would suggest had 'delocalised' the impression of the policing service provided. In one extreme example, a respondent described that

'there were five coffee jar bombs up in [name] street a couple of weeks ago [February 2008], and I met a car full of policemen who asked *me* where the street was because they were from South Belfast [command area]. Everything should be local' (I36).

In another example, the practical delivery of a policing service was so poor because of resources that the *only* service delivered was that of 'blue light' response policing. As illustrated in this regard:

'local policing has just got worse, and worse, and worse where they're literally non-existent when you contact them. And if you're in the know a wee bit like we would be and the work we do, we know what their [PSNI]

targets are. Then you can advise people whether they should bother their ass to phone the police, because if it's not on the target list, you know there is no way they're going to respond' (I63).

One of the intractable public realities for the level of policing service was the PSNI's management of, and 'foresight' with regard to the new political dispensation. On one level, virtually all community respondents believed

'we're [in Northern Ireland] normalising our levels of policing at a much quicker rate [than PSNI should] and that is leaving a gap...if we want communities to have confidence in the police and in neighbourhood policing, they need to have the resources to deliver those results' (I35).

On another level, the message from the officers was that due to this 'gap', they could not effectively police *both* Loyalist/Unionist and (newly supportive) Nationalist/Republican communities (I7). As stated by an Inspector in West Belfast,

'we've had an awful lot more reports...so we're getting far, far greater increases [in demand for the police]. But then we don't have the same resources we had...it's physically impossible...And that has a knock on effect where they [communities] don't have faith in the police...' (I17).

In overview, the findings would indicate that statistical measurement, performance culture and diminishing resources have all combined to significantly limit the delivery community policing by PSNI. But in regard to the ten years PSNI have had since Patten in which to develop, implement and deliver 'Policing with the Community' as the core to the police reforms, it was a damning indictment of the footing upon which policing currently stands when a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board publicly stated in April 2008:

'it [policing] is about getting into their [PSNI] head that they don't represent our community; and they're not from our community; that they've never had any affinity with our community; they don't understand our community – but they *will* deliver a proper policing service to our community, and they'll deliver one that we as a community feel is appropriate for our needs' (Public Speech, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008 Europa Hotel, Belfast).

### **4.7.3 Service Delivery – Summary of Findings**

- Virtually no organisational support for the delivery of community policing within PSNI;
- Community policing a minor, peripheral part of PSNI's predominantly 'response-only' service, far from the core of the service as demanded by Patten;
- Community policing and how it is delivered within the organisation is caught up at the nebulous level;
- No organisational definition of community policing beyond vague policy aspirations, with no managerial commitment to the concept;
- For the NPTs who deliver community policing, this is still only a fraction of their service due to other pressures;
- Managerial favouritism for service delivery which can be measured, antithetical to community policing as part of excel culture which promotes mediocrity;
- Community in no way shape or contribute to the delivery of the policing service they receive – paper policing only;
- Service delivery under current management regime a vicious circle, with reductions in crime causing resources to be reduced;
- Service delivery has to start with the community as the source of knowledge as to the service the community needs delivered;
- Delivery of community policing not necessarily desired or safe within certain areas due to continuing security/terrorist threats;
- Delivering community policing about pushing boundaries and proving effectiveness within hard-to-reach areas;
- Service delivery needs to compromise with community infrastructures in terms of the policing delivered;
- Positive service delivery/community policing necessary to ameliorate the negative, conflict related experiences of certain communities;

- Delivery of policing in certain areas so bad, communities have no expectations of a policing service whatsoever;
- Continued and rising pressure upon paramilitaries to police areas because PSNI's service is so bad;
- Delivery of policing has gone 'backwards' in many areas, with PSNI unable to police both communities as part of the new political dispensation.



## **5.0 Interpretation and Analysis – Governance of Security**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In regard to the governance of security, the findings have been broken down (and interpreted) in a similar vein to that of community policing. Thus, exploring ‘policing’ from the ‘bottom-up’ community perspective, the findings are presented and interpreted within the following categories: accounting for security governance (accountability); devolved and plural policing (empowerment); local capacities for security governance (problem solving); networked and nodal considerations (partnership); and nature of security governance (service delivery). While none of the categories are mutually exclusive, they provide an effective framework within which to interpret the empirical data. It should also be noted that the terms governance of security, security governance and security governing are used interchangeably throughout.

## **5.2 Accounting for Security Governance**

### **5.2.1 Accounting for Security Governance from the Police Perspective**

On a simple level, the differences between PSNI and community attitudes towards policing were broadly reflective of the ‘otherness’ to the concept of policing, as engendered throughout the conflict. In relation to the ‘gap’ between police and community perspectives on local ‘policing’, the community had never been ‘anti-policing’, just ‘anti-police’ (I42). This position was evidenced in the views of one RCO, who believed that it was because of community isolation from the police for the past 40 years, it was natural that differing (and often competing) visions of how policing should ‘look’ at the local level; and what ‘accounted’ for ‘alternative’, non-state policing had evolved in the first place (I65).

A corollary of this backdrop to police and community conceptions of policing was an ingrained ‘cynicism’ in the attitudes of officers to the work of community-based organisations (and who and what they represented). Undoubtedly, this too was rooted in the historical antecedents of police interaction with communities throughout the conflict. Indeed, officers were often quick to state that

‘I know guys in [named community group], and they were all involved [in paramilitaries], there’s no doubt about that in West Belfast – they were all involved...The Chair of the [named community group] was involved and the majority of the ones at the DPP meeting last night were involved. You just have to get over that for ten years, they’d been trying to shoot you’ (I14).

On a broader, organisational level within PSNI, the findings uncovered a ‘collective sentiment’ with regard community-based security governance and how it was ‘accounted’ for. Indeed, many officers believed that ‘things hadn’t really moved on that far’ in respect of community-based security provision and its (close) association with paramilitarism (I18). The ingrained nature of such attitudes became clear in that ‘trust’ between the police and community was described as a ‘zero sum’ game, because at the heart of this issue:

‘as things moved on from Patten, they [communities] still don’t think the leopard [PSNI] changed its spots. And those people within the police don’t think the leopard has changed its spots and all that’ (I66).

Within the strategic tiers of PSNI, such attitudes were significant in terms of their influence on holding community-based security governance bodies and actors to account for their work. Firstly, regarding the simple funding of initiatives, one Republican organisation involved in tentative co-operation with PSNI stated

‘it’s all the mistrust [of us] – but I’ve learnt that, I’ve been around for long enough to know that...it’s how much they [PSNI] are going to get out of it. And this is where the political end comes into it, that’s where they’re playing politics: ‘should we fund them?’... But you wouldn’t do this job if it was solely about funding. Obviously funding is important, and there’s many-a-time when we’ve worked for nothing...and sometimes I don’t think the government can get their head around it, that they are cautious, that they are saying ‘is that a Sinn Fein project?’ (I65).

This issue of funding as a means of ‘controlling’ local security governance initiatives was evident from the responses across the sample areas. As noted, there was a distinct ‘sense that the desire to control it [local security governance initiatives] is always there which is linked to the willingness [of PSNI] to pay or resource it...’ (I64). This was further evidenced by a RCO in regard to funding from the Belfast City Council. With this organisation as one of the few sources of ‘policing authority’ in an area where PSNI acceptability was still contested:

‘that [funding policy] is a big problem – and it actually says on the bottom of some forms ‘restorative justice groups need not apply’. That’s *actually printed* on the forms, its mad! But it’s *still* there’ (I52).

Indeed, there appeared to be a broader clash of PSNI/state and community ‘ideologies’ about indicators of success; what accounted for results delivered; and the allocation funds for community-based security governing. Bound up more closely with new public management, it was a general feature of security governance activity (and accountability for such work) that

‘it is qualitative stuff, and it’s hard to identify what differences you have made – maybe if you hadn’t intervened, what would have happened then?...the Government departments want to see hard statistical facts, and

community groups can't come up with that because that's not the way they work and it's not the way they think' (I39).

But moving away from accountability for security governing in this regard, the findings also evidenced a number of issues which resonate more closely with police *understanding* of communities and security governance activities as a means of enhancing oversight and accountability. Again, at the NPT level there was a clear understanding of, and willingness to, engage with such community-based groups as key community 'stakeholders' concerned with local security provision. To some extent, this feeling was reciprocated at the community level. As noted:

'I think with the way things have changed, the police have realised they have to go to the grass-roots level, and that have to start dealing with people at grass-roots levels, the same way grass-roots levels are being asked to deal with them. There's a common ground occurring there at the minute where people [within PSNI and communities] are quite willing to deal with each other' (I56).

It was further recognised that not only did such engagement possess an intrinsic operational value for police, but it also provided a mechanism with which police could effectively 'reach out' to all sections of the community on policing issues, while enhancing levels of oversight associated with the provision local security governing. As argued by a neighbourhood Inspector

'quite simply, the three main groups we're dealing with in [area of West Belfast] are all representative of different people. And to be honest, some of them are aligned with some of their political sort, you know, either Sinn Fein or SDLP...but we find *everybody* [in the community through such organisations] is being reached because we're talking to all those bodies that represent the community' (I9).

Thus, 'community understanding' through such engagement not only allowed officers to hold community groups to account for problems in the locale (through meetings and contacts) which *they* could deal with, but it further allowed officers to 'tailor' local community policing initiatives more closely with community security capacities (I32). And far from such community capacities presenting a 'threat' to PSNI, the level of accountability demonstrated by such groups enhanced the acceptance of such non-state 'policing' as an *additional* policing resource at the NPT

level. This sentiment was captured by one neighbourhood officer in West Belfast, noting

‘the fact you get, well, you have vigilantes and concerned residents’ groups – people would say paramilitaries. But the genuine people who live in their estates and stand on street corners or whatever...if that’s within the law, then that’s good. The thing is, the public have to take ownership of their estates – this is the area *they* live in. And with all these groups being set up within the law, I think that’s very positive’ (I16).

However, it would appear from the findings that above the level of the local NPT, the appreciation of local security governance capacities as a police ‘gateway’ into communities and as a means of ‘opening up’ avenues of accountability was virtually non-existent. Breaking down at the most basic levels of understanding ‘community’ *per se*, one umbrella organisation felt that in regard to PSNI management:

‘we in the community and voluntary sector have our definition of what community is. I think the police...all the statutes then have their definition of what community is. And I’m not really sure what it means when a statutory organisation say ‘we’re going to do more community policing’, or, ‘we want to be closer to the community’. I’m not sure what that means for them, and what it means to us is obviously different to them’ (I63).

The findings would further indicate that in the face of competing PSNI and community ‘thinking’ with regard to *policing* (I58), the potential value of community groups to enhance accountability for local policing issues was further limited. Firstly, PSNI management’s lack of understanding as to local security governing restricted local issues to police-centric language and thinking. Thus, it was perceived

‘there needs to be a sea change in policing...and how we [community and PSNI] view the whole idea of being a society...the police have a pivotal role in that, but I think people need to sit down as *communities*, as politicians and examine what sort of society we are and what we expect within that...’ (I40).

Secondly, community respondents frequently articulated the differences between their own ‘creativity’ and ‘energy’ to provide solutions to local criminogenic issues, and the ‘one-dimensional’ PSNI ‘solutions’ which focused upon arrests and clearance rates (I55). In the absence of what was termed ‘big violence’

(denoting the reduction in conflict-related violence), it was the ‘smaller’ quality of life issues which were becoming more important to deal with in communities (I36). And with community groups involved in security provision ideally placed to provide *social* rather than *police* measures of accountability for their work (I47), it was profoundly illustrated,

‘most of this stuff [crime] is social policy. You can’t shoot educational achievement; shoot unemployment; you can’t shoot poverty. Do you know what I mean? So you’re never going to resolve issues of criminality...because the reality is it’s the working conditions, living conditions, self-expectations that make a difference’ (I54).

In overview of the findings with regard to PSNI ‘accounting’ for local security governance, it was clearly felt to be more than community organisations ‘opening up their books’ to the police. Indeed, effective security governing requires the police to co-operate with such groups; appreciate their capacities and roles; and engage with them in a manner that is conducive to all parties being accountable for their contribution local policing issues (I52). Furthermore, the police need to be cognisant of the fact that those involved in local security governance activities are no less accountable for what they do because of their (paramilitary) pasts. As noted by one officer in West Belfast, ‘you’ve got people who were the problem [during the conflict] who have now become part of the solution [to dealing with crime]’ (I8). Thus, in fostering a culture of ‘community governance policing’, which effectively involves *and* holds all parties to account for their (potential and actual) contributions to local security provision, it was felt ‘everyone has to strip away the old prejudices and start to construct something quite new’ (I51).

### 5.2.2 Accounting for Security Governance from the Community Perspective

Having explored accountability and security governance from the police perspective, it is important to detail local, community-based perspectives on what contributes to accountability within a security governance framework at the local levels within the sample areas.

In many ways, the sheer volume of effort, organising and dedication of community groups to the promotion of community-based security governance provided the subtext to, and justification for, their existence in the first place (see *Appendix A*). It was apparent that the practical and political constraints to normal policing provision throughout the Troubles (and present lack of ‘normal’ policing) had necessitated much of the non-state security provision which existed within the sample areas. As explained by one group, their role and capacity was not premised upon them

‘being community police [force] in [area], because we’re not. We’re no alternative to the PSNI. What we *are* is a response to a lack of policing in our own areas. So we aren’t out trying to be the ‘[named place] cops’. It isn’t like that at all. There was stuff [crime] going on, it wasn’t being policed, and it *needed* to be policed. So we developed a community response to that’ (I54).

However, beyond what may be viewed as a simplistic, utilitarian response to deficits in state policing, there are a number of more subtle and complex community issues to be explored.

At the heart of accounting for non-state security governing within East and West Belfast, the ‘alternative’ provision of policing was premised on the accepted fact that

‘policing hadn’t been great – but we need to basically shape and create our own destiny with policing. In other words, we have to engage with the police in different sorts of circumstances...a cohesive approach to policing whereby if policing is left to different pockets...it will be hard to basically develop’ (I1).

Furthermore, it was a broad feature of the community responses that to develop their 'destiny' with policing and provide solutions to crime and its underlying causes, effective security governing depended upon the ability of key groups within locales to co-ordinate local capacities in a transparent, democratic manner (I53). Indeed, it was generally argued by neighbourhood officers who engaged with such groups that there were extremely representative of (and accountable to) the populations of the sample areas. Indeed, the broad coalescence of social, economic and cultural capacities around policing and anti-community issues brought together many spheres of community life into homogeneous and accountable bodies at the local level (I4). While respondents were aware of some groups' ability to 'promote' their views more succinctly than others (I36), it was the practical 'operationalisation' of 'representativeness' and accountability brought to the table which was perceived to be of value within a security governance context.

As a means of providing a focal point for community sentiment and values in regard to anti-community behaviours, there was a distinct propensity for strategic organising around such issues. Indeed, 'community forums' and multi-agency groups were a common feature of the accountability landscape within the sample areas. And as a means of promoting locally accountable responses for their own (non-state) activities *and* from other statutory and community agencies:

'any anti-social behaviour, criminality that comes into my office – the idea is once it comes into my office...that needs to be documented and logged. I can then look at it, assess it, and see which agencies it is relevant to. It could be relevant to social services, Housing Executive, Public Prosecution Service, Probation...it's about the community taking control of it...It doesn't matter what agency it's in relation to. That way if I'm not getting back to you, you can come and chase me and hold me to account. I can then turn round and find out what has broken down and who is not doing their job – *that* is accountability' (I55).

It was also evident that such strategic working provided the foundations for 'dense', intra-community organising between many groups involved in local security provision. This allowed for the dissemination of knowledge out to, and communication of information in from virtually every sphere of the community



which related to or was affected by crime and policing issues. As one group in outer-West Belfast noted,

‘it might be a bit blasé of me to say the [named group] represents *a* community, but it really does. It covers Lagmore, Twinbrook, Poleglass, Dunmurry...it transcends class, politics, its cross-community, cross-class...’ (I54).

The findings also demonstrated that in terms of promoting accountable working practices, virtually all of those groups who provided a ‘policing’ resource (in whatever form) frequently participated in housing, economic, employment and community safety sub-groups of larger umbrella community organisations. Thus, such organising was ostensibly about accountability mechanisms outside that of state policing structures and which: reflected community values; through which crime and anti-community behaviour could be dealt with; provided a mechanism to co-ordinate responses at strategic and operational levels; and co-ordinated the appropriate agencies relevant to a particular issue (I53).

From an objective viewpoint, a general feature of community-based responses was simply the fact that policing (as undertaken by PSNI) would be much more difficult if it was not for the delivery of security governance activity at the community level. As identified in one comment:

‘without the community infrastructure and the communities who are there to support the community organisations...it [policing] would be difficult’ (I47).

However, it is important to explore this statement in greater detail to understand accountability more fully within a security governance context. Firstly, the majority of community groups were at pains to note that broadly, accountability for security governance activity must be conceived in terms of key groups within a community, as those who provide ‘security resources’. Such key groups were perceived as vital because very often, they were the first ‘port of call’ for crime issues rather than PSNI (I47). Furthermore, they acted as ‘barometers’ of community sentiment with regard to crime, how it should be dealt with, and perceptions of PSNI response.

Secondly, because of the difficulties in documenting, detailing or measuring much of the security provision and intervention provided by community groups,

respondents felt that when interacting with PSNI, they were under constant pressure to work within *police* rather than broad narrow *policing* parameters and language (I40). Though as ventured by one respondent,

‘if you’re going to talk about allowing it [community-based security governance] to exist and to use its strengths and to capitalise on its voice and to use it as a conduit – we have to accept the organic nature of it and accept the fact it is independent, and if you [PSNI] don’t like what you’re hearing, too bad...’ (I64).

Thirdly, it was felt that only through key groups (in addition to state policing structures) could the PSNI have ‘real’ access to the entire social strata which comprised the sample areas. From the ability of community groups to form ad-hoc independent advisory groups (IAGs) through to accessing ‘hard to reach’ groups within communities:

‘it’s through the likes of ourselves [named group]...that they [PSNI] got an insight or inroad into the community, because at the minute, they’re so far detached from it...the NPT would not have been able to get in touch...They might have been able to approach them, but they [community] wouldn’t have responded’ (I47).

Not only did such key groups provide access mechanisms in the social fabric of the sample areas, but they also provided an accountability framework for (and insight into) the values held with regard to policing and security governance. With many such groups with the ‘finger on the pulse’ of community issues, to a certain extent they also supplied a level of ‘community training’ for the police with regard to community capacities, expectations, values and priorities regarding crime and policing (I53; I57; I57; I48). Thus, where such state and non-state security capacities could combine within an accountable, community-anchored framework, the findings would suggest potential for a ‘new’ form of social and contextual accountability for policing which looks beyond the ‘faceless’, a-contextual, police-centric use of statistics and surveys (I36).

Finally, in view of the issues highlighted as part of community perspectives on accounting for security governance, fundamental barriers will remain to PSNI understanding of the potential for community-anchored accountability insofar as

‘the community is only a meaningful concept if people are allowed to organise, associate and articulate collective views. Which means...working through organisations. So if you [PSNI] don’t trust or fund or support those organisations, and recognise what they are, you can’t deal *with* the community...’ (I64).

### **5.2.3 Accounting for Security Governance –**

#### **Summary of Findings**

- Significant difference between PSNI and non-state conceptions of policing, how it should ‘look’ and what accounted for policing activity;
- Suspicion and cynicism between PSNI and community bodies due to lack of understanding or trust in each others policing activities;
- Feelings of over-control by non-state actors by PSNI because they did not account for their policing work in traditional police ‘language’;
- Clash of what constitutes indicators of success, what accounted for results between PSNI and non-state actors – quantitative police versus qualitative community measures of success;
- Recognition at the NPT level that accountability can only be built by working at grass-roots community level, providing more accountability because of greater mutual reach into each other’s working mentalities;
- Competing police and community definitions of what constitutes ‘community’ and therefore how it should be policed;
- Fundamentally different approaches to accountability for policing, with PSNI concerned with statistics and non-state actors concerned with social policy, housing, education;
- Non-state activity generally accounted for in context of its necessity in past due to conflict and present due to lack of policing;
- Non-state groups generally democratic in character, representative for their work in terms of community forums, multi-agency partnerships and liaising with statutory bodies;
- Strong emphasis on listening to communities and disseminating information out to communities;
- Non-state groups very often the only source of accountability for policing activity because of issues regarding PSNI legitimacy issues;
- Need for PSNI to accept the organic nature of non-state actors outside the remit of police-centric language and understanding;

- Community bodies provide a social, contextual and community-anchored framework for accountability, enhancing the practical reality in which policing is undertaken.

## 5.3 Devolved and Plural Policing

### 5.3.1 Police Perspectives on Devolved Policing

In regard to the police perspective on devolving ‘policing authority’ (in its broadest sense) down to the community level, the findings highlighted a number of disconnections between PSNI and community groups on a variety of levels. From attitudes and perceptions through to funding and strategy, the following section will explore such issues and interpret them within the complex community ‘field’ of security governance and ‘devolved policing’ autonomy.

A clear concern articulated by the majority of groups involved in local, security governance activity was the fact the PSNI were ‘not really taking the community sector seriously...organisationally, community links aren’t their top priority’ (I46). Indeed, *within* PSNI itself respondents from (mainly) managerial ranks were generally ambivalent as to the potential utility of harnessing local, security capacities within the sample areas. As one officer remarked,

‘there are all these organisations, and you can call them what you like, but there is a reluctance...there is a reluctance to let go of some control. And I don’t mean you hand over policing [to community groups] wholesale, but to work more with, and give more to community groups and organisations which are already in existence’ (I62).

More fundamentally in regard to the ‘place’ of such organisations within PSNI conceptions of policing:

‘we [PSNI] haven’t got the courage to engage with those sorts of people [community-based groups] effectively yet, to do that yet – the power balance isn’t right yet. We’re not willing to give them [community groups] any powers, and certainly not a uniform to walk the streets or allow them ‘into’ the organisation’ (I33).

Interestingly, a number of neighbourhood officers (as the operational face of community policing) also subscribed to this ‘world view’, which itself raised a number of subtle issues around empowering community and their capacities within the broader context of security governing. There was a tendency for officers to hold

pre-conceived views of such groups, which in turn engendered often narrow and ill-informed conceptions of their work. In reference to a well known organisation in West Belfast who co-ordinated 'community patrols', it was cynically noted by one officer that

'where I grew up they were called vigilantes...it's your second tier policing really...but is anyone responsible for vetting it? I have to be honest, I honestly find it [their activity] quite repulsive. Because, you, know what has happened in the past, and as [officer] says, it is vigilantism...The big problem I would have with those people up around West Belfast would be what do they do if they stop somebody...so if they have that sort of authority [shrugs]' (I21).

However, to counter-balance such opinions, there were a number of positive, if tentative responses in favour of devolving *some* degree of 'power'. In view of ever increasing pressures on police resources along with demands on officers' time, it was a notable remark from one neighbourhood Inspector that

'policing *can't* be left to the police. And I mean, if a local community want to take steps, and real positive steps in order to address various issues in that area, I think it should be encouraged, but it should be done in co-operation with the police...' (I33).

Furthermore, in reference to what was perceived as the PSNI's 'thin' approach to such devolved or plural policing, community organisations were all too aware of the restrictive attitudes within PSNI's management ranks and which ultimately limited police and community synergy. In failing to 'see' the broader 'picture' of policing which could potentially harness and empower local community capacities (to contribute to policing in whatever form), the findings further evidenced the narrow, police view of policing and security governance. Indeed, a number of community respondents undertook activities in relation to local criminality, which in turn brought them into contact with a variety of agencies, including (but not limited to): Youth Justice Agency; Probation Service; drug and alcohol groups; Social Services; and the Housing Executive. And while further co-ordinating and distributing such agencies and their services in conjunction with residents' federations (which often covered large populations), they were 'at a loss' as to why the police were often reluctant to tap into, or devolve more policing autonomy (I54;

I56; I63). Although, it appeared that it was very often the organic, more informal nature of such security governing which failed to lend itself to being audited, 'costed' or tightly controlled within police parameters (I48).

With regard to the operational 'face' of devolved and plural policing, it was noted there were very few 'drivers' to promote effective police/community group synergy beyond local 'personalities'. At the community level it was perceived that

'if the police invested in...communities and created a fund that would be available to community to develop relationship with the police and other agencies to deal with crime on a local basis, that gives opportunities then for community workers who have a whole raft of experience and skills to begin to look at that. But at the moment, as it has been up to now, the police only approach the people they think are useful to *them*' (I38).

However, with a lack of resources or 'tools' through which to empower the work of community groups in combination with the narrow 'view' of PSNI attitudes more generally, it meant there was simply no foundation for devolving aspects of the broad, plural policing function within broad security governance 'thinking'. As summarised by one frustrated community group in East Belfast,

'why don't they [PSNI] try and think strategically about the [community] stuff that's already there – whether it's drugs education, ending anti-social behaviour, whatever. Why don't they think about those things? So I suppose that to me, the proof of the pudding in a way, that senior [PSNI] management aren't prepared to contribute resources that are under their control...' (I48).

Another issue raised was that of 'community compliance' with PSNI policing objectives. In what was perceived to be an understanding of, but implicit failure to recognise, accept or empower community-based security capacities as part of policing more broadly conceived, it was believed that

'the whole issue [of devolving power] has been a very thorny one for such long time, and a lot of hostility developed. In a way, I think a lot of what happened [reference to restorative justice accreditation] was tactical, it was about squeezing West Belfast *particularly*, and the Republican community into compliance...and there was that kind of tension. In my view...all of that [community-based security governing] was being squeezed into compliance' (I58).



Even in dealing with the relatively mundane, quality of life issues, one restorative justice group subject to recent Northern Ireland Office accreditation for their work felt ‘squeezed into compliance’ through un-necessary procedure and bureaucracy.

Another facet of the devolved and plural security ‘debate’ was the need for PSNI to consider the *social* benefits of devolving power (and resources) to community groups as social ‘agents’ to assist in dealing with crime issues. With many crime issues bound up in social policy considerations, limiting the devolution of power and authority to community groups was not viewed as a logical premise upon which to deal with socially embedded criminogenic problems (I31). Thus, with community groups involved in security governance as those best placed to deal with social problems within local contexts (I54), ‘you have got to remember...that in many ways we’re [community groups] only really papering over the cracks unless there is real commitment... [from PSNI]’ (I58).

In overview, the findings have evidenced a lack of willingness within PSNI for the identification of, and devolution of power and resources to, appropriate community bodies – limiting the extent to which policing may be enhanced within broad security governance ‘thinking’ (I33). However, the underlying barrier to empowering such organisations was made explicitly clear by one senior PSNI officer. In reference to the upper echelons within PSNI and in view of the prospect of *with whom* police may have to engage with and devolve power to as part of ‘community governance policing’:

‘I have had personal experience of being at meetings...and the likes of the people [community organisations] they were talking about involving were horrifying the PSNI there. The idea that people from the restorative justice programmes, the Safer Neighbourhood programmes – the idea horrified them; it was anathema to the ‘old school’ RUC/PSNI establishment...that there would ever be the like of civil reps, those type of people...’ (I61).

### 5.3.2 Community as an Auspice of Security Provision

In an attempt to unravel the findings with regard to community perspectives on devolved and plural security provision, a vital tenet to the interpretation and understanding is context. With rationales and mentalities inextricably linked with the politics of policing, the focus on civil society as an auspice of security provision is both complex and nuanced, as shall now be explored.

An initial feature of the community responses (and especially those from West Belfast/Republican communities) was that their actual or potential capacity to act as an auspice of security provision was not premised upon a neutral desire to reduce crime and ‘do good’ for the community. With an historical absence of, and opposition to state policing in West Belfast (and to lesser extent, areas of East Belfast), community-based security governing was very often

‘desperately important, and I think we’d [as a society] be a lot worse off without that. We’re careful about making overstated claims about the community sector holding this place together for 30 years...but the cutting edge work on policing and security and parading and interfaces and all that...Frankly, no one else would have been *able* to do it’ (I64).

Thus, it is necessary to conceive community-based security governing in broad, contextual policing terms, rather than narrow police views in order to appreciate the potential benefits and contribution.

From this perspective, the findings evidenced an over-simplified ‘view’ on devolved security provision through the lens of ‘legitimacy discourse’. This was illustrated in the attitudes of officers at all levels in terms of the people, the agendas and the politics ‘behind’ community groups and their roles, rationalities and capacities. As illustrated in one comment, the use of ‘community’ as an auspice of security

‘in principle sounds really good, I like that...but if it’s not going to work really well, it won’t work at all. So if the risk is so great between working well and disaster [pauses]. I think if everything was done correctly and you’d a good bunch of people – but I can’t see that being the case. You might have people who might have different agendas with the community, and if that happens, then it’s disastrous’ (I27).

Even a group with Northern Ireland Office accreditation for the restorative justice work perceived that their role within their community was undermined because of such attitudes within the criminal justice system and the PSNI. This was identified by one LCO, who stated:

‘obviously we would try and direct as many people as possible towards the police. What we’re trying to do is build a relationship with the police to make this community safer. Our difficult is we feel we’re *still* not being used by the police and by the criminal justice system. The Youth Justice Agency still don’t talk to us, even though we’ve received accreditation. We’re actually being funded at the minute by the NIO...they [NIO] won’t let their organisations talk to us – I find it bizarre’ (I47).

Further underpinning this ‘legitimacy discourse’ was a fear within PSNI that paramilitaries would somehow ‘hijack’ the legitimate mandates of existing organisations; or as often assumed, such organisations already had a paramilitary ‘presence’ which de-legitimated their work. On one level, this was a valid argument insofar as it was widely acknowledged that paramilitaries in East and West Belfast were: a) still the arbiters (in many cases) as to whether communities could contact the PSNI over certain issues (I18); and b) still very much involved in local criminality. As stated by an officer:

‘we went to speak to a youth...where the youth was involved in anti-social behaviour, and his father was able to tell us the paramilitaries were involved. There is still an influence there...I thought ‘have we really moved forward?’ The paramilitaries are *still* seen as being able to assist in some ways with these things’ (I30).

Though on another level, there were a band of ‘enlightened’ officers who, outside the moral arguments for engaging with community groups with ‘shady’ backgrounds, realised the potential of conferring a degree of legitimacy and power to community agents. Across both East and West Belfast, it was clear that there were officers

‘out there having conversations with community reps and building relationships with people who traditionally would have been seen, and still are seen as on the periphery of organisations which were linked to paramilitaries...those difficult conversations are becoming easier for those [paramilitary] people, heavily involved in the Provisional IRA and the likes, and are now community workers who have moved away from their past’ (I33).

Moving away from context and towards the social utility (potentially) provided by devolved power for security governance, the findings highlighted a number of benefits at the community and police levels. In one regard, increasing the autonomy afforded to community groups (and their members) involved in local security provision was seen as a positive step towards re-connecting PSNI rationales behind policing with the wider social rationales of local security governing. Indeed, this was believed to go some way towards the ‘re-education’ of communities traditionally ‘alienated’, and provide ‘tools’ with which to break the cultural cycle of passive resistance to mutual co-operation with the police (I48; I53). Thus, devolving more power and direction to community groups would allow them to act as conduits through which to re-calibrate the ‘balance’ between police and community levels of security provision within the broader objectives of policing as a ‘public good’. As illustrated by an influential community group in West Belfast,

‘a gang then went down and tried to wreck a house, an innocent family, kicked the door in and assaulted a woman. We had two choices – we could have mobilised the local community, but we said no. We’ll ring the cops and give *them* a chance’ (I65).

As the respondent went on to note through this example, PSNI actually responded quickly and dealt with the problem in an effective and efficient manner, thus encouraging members of that group to pass on evidence to PSNI as witnessed through their ‘monitoring’ of the event. Furthermore, it was interesting to note the observation of one senior officer in regard to devolving some power and responsibility down what they termed ‘the right people and organisations’. In reference to the historical disconnections between the police, Loyalist and Republican communities and notions of policing as a common ‘public good’, devolved autonomy and responsibility would go some way to addressing crime problems engendered by such disconnections in the first place. As profoundly stated:

‘let’s be honest and clear about one thing. The lawlessness that goes on in West Belfast was created by the very organisation [Sinn Féin] that’s now...engaging with the police and holding the police accountable. Sinn

Fein and the paramilitary organisations they were associated with, but also in Loyalist areas, they have a *responsibility* that they created a culture of lawlessness if you understand. For me, they have an additional responsibility, because they create this monster, this dysfunctional society. So this meant policing was never accepted...Somehow they have to change that, and it's up to Sinn Fein and others to step in and change that, because the police can't just do that. By being good at policing, it won't automatically change that culture' (I66).

It is also apt to note that community respondents identified wider social benefits should a broader range of policing functions be placed within their responsibility. On one level, a prerequisite for more effective policing was the need for community groups to have a lead role on local policing issues over which they have ability and responsibility to deal with (I38). With limited value attached to the PSNI merely 'implanting' policing,

'it's the whole legitimacy issues you know. There's no point in ten strangers [police] walking into your street and having a go...you're half beaten before you start, so that's why *local* people need to take the lead...' (I54).

On another level, a wider benefit to devolving more policing direction at the local level were the potential 'mobilising' influences of key groups and actors. In effectively mobilising large sections of community with regard to crime and anti-community behaviours, one such key group (in a snap-shot of their work) explained:

'we're in the process of re-invigorating all the residents' associations across the Upper Springfield area...I think there's a total of 12 to 13 groups from the Upper Springfield, and the intention is that as a powerful community, as powerful set of residents' associations, we can tackle things across a range of issues' (I55).

Another, more pragmatic benefit to devolved security governing was the alternative and unconventional potential of community groups in terms of their working practices. This was generally recognised by the NPTs, who felt community organisations provided a more holistic approach to dealing with crime. In the response of one officer, he argued that

'they'll [groups] say we have a problem, but we don't want it reported to the police, it's just kids, whatever. But the empowerment is good because they are trying to sort out issues within the neighbourhood, trying to get people to

volunteer rather than just calling the police: 'why don't you [community members] volunteer and come out of your house and give us some of your time, take a wee group, football coaching or whatever' (I24).

Developing this point further, the findings also demonstrated 'socially innovative' thinking by community groups in respect of their approach to crime issues. A common theme in both East and West Belfast was the development of 'social economy' projects around policing issues. With regard to filling the resourcing 'gaps' associated with PSNI provision of policing, there was actively lobbying of the Belfast City Council to utilise community capacities and resources in regard to anti-community behaviours (such as community patrols and alcohol education) which, while voluntary, were actively tackling and preventing crime in the area. As part of providing sustainable, community-based solutions to criminogenic issues, it was ventured by the organisation that

'one of the ways I see them [the community] doing that is to try, with the gaps in policing and the numbers of policemen, to set up a social economy project around the issue of community wardens...these wardens could do community safety, environmental, street lights, reporting [crime]; if an alarm goes off in one of the schools...If the Housing Executive is already paying someone to be a litter warden or the council are, why not give the money and have service level agreements with organisations like this, so we can then employ the people and they then buy the service off us' (I53).

Indeed, building on the voluntary origins which underpinned security governing, social economy around policing was indicative of attempts by such groups to facilitate 'people making a contribution to their own community in a very direct way, and it's about local people improving the quality of life for their own areas, which sustains participation' (I41).

But in overview of the community as an auspice of security provision through devolved and plural policing provision, in spite of the various limitations to its potential, there was an air of optimism from community respondents. In view of the new political dispensation and reductions in PSNI resources, a number of community groups believed that 'old' attitudes to their work were softening. As a result of the 'new' and improving co-operation between PSNI and community groups (at least in West Belfast), one group noted such working will 'probably open their [PSNI] eyes a

bit – they probably have looked and gone ‘Jesus, these ones are organised here, they know what they’re about’ (I56). However, community groups were acutely aware of the ‘vacuum’ created through reduced numbers of police resources, reduced levels of paramilitary control and a continued failure by the PSNI and Government to adequately empower latent capacities as a viable auspice of security provision. And in regard to serious PSNI and Government ‘thinking’ about using such latent, community capacities, it was simply noted:

‘we’ve an opportunity here under this new [policing] dispensation to get it [policing generally] right, to solve problems that face those police services elsewhere and work with all the groups...the community sector in its broadest sense...we’ve an opportunity now not to fall into the problems, difficulties and issues that those other communities face...We’re now fighting a tide [of crime and social issues] that’s ready to overwhelm us. But we’ve got to change *now* to deal with it’ (I42).

### **5.3.3 Devolved and Plural Policing Provision – Summary of Findings**

- A significant apathy within PSNI to take the non-state sector seriously as a viable auspice of policing and security provision, or the courage to engage with those on the periphery of communities;
- Devolved power and empowerment limited by a lack of understanding of non-state roles and capacities;
- Recognition at NPT level that devolving power to community actors necessary as PSNI unable to police everything;
- Many community organisations already engaged with a variety of statutory bodies, yet continued PSNI refusal to engage or empower;
- No drivers within PSNI to look outside their own parameters and devolve power to non-state bodies over policing issues;
- No PSNI strategic or operational awareness of non-state security governance activity;
- Lack of devolved power to non-state groups limits the potential responses to community problems to narrow police-centric, not social solutions;
- Devolving power over policing matters needs to begin with pre-existing, empowered bodies and organisations;
- Over-simplistic legitimacy/illegitimacy discourse used to judge necessity of devolved power and authority to community bodies;
- Conflation of community power with paramilitary power;
- Devolved and plural policing provision as a means of reconnecting community and PSNI rationales around policing and security governance; re-educating communities about policing; and recalibrating the balance of state/non-state rationales around security as a public good;
- Devolved power to local auspices of security provision as a means of promoting legitimacy because of local stake in the policing matters;
- Mobilising influences of local, non-state actors around policing issues;
- Potential for social economy projects around policing provision;



- Devolving power and authority to non-state actors around policing matters can help fill the present ‘gap’ in policing provision left by PSNI.

## 5.4 Local Capacities for Security Governance

### 5.4.1 Social Capacity and Security Governance

When examining the social capacity of communities (and their organisations) to identify and deal with crime and anti-community behaviours (or problem solve), it is important to note that such capacities, as ‘social traits’ of security governing are bound up in the context of, and social circumstances in which they are situated. Thus, the findings are not intended to provide a discrete ‘measure’ of such capacities *per se*. Rather, the following section will evidence the value of such ‘problem solving’ capacities along with an understanding of their utility within the specific contexts of East and West Belfast.

One of the fundamental issues underpinning the origins and context to local, social capacities within a security governance context was again, the legacy of the conflict. In reference to the strong, supporting community infrastructures to such social capacities, it was simply stated

‘the community infrastructure over the years has had to be as strong as it has been in the absence of a police force that was accepted...people looked out for themselves really’ (I56).

Though beyond the *raison d’être* for strong community infrastructure, it was notable that the ‘binding force’ to this ‘social framework’ for dealing with policing issues was also derived from ‘community values and solidarity as the strength of communities and the basis of communities...even at the height of the war...crime was low’ (I60).

But far from this community framework remaining frozen in historical context, the findings evidenced the ‘receptiveness’ of community values and solidarity to changes in the ‘reality’ of society and crime. In this regard, it was perceived that the ‘loosening’ of the conflict had enabled community structures (as a collection of community groups) along with their supporting values to refocus upon more ‘normal’ crime and policing issues insofar as

‘I would say for the first time [since the Good Friday Agreement], I get the feeling that this is the only real proper infrastructure there has been or organising there has been to try and address the *needs* of the community’ (I41).

Even members of PSNI were appreciative of opportunities afforded by the post-conflict dispensation to ‘steer’ the body politic of community organisations towards ‘community’, rather than ‘conflict-based’ activities (I23). However, it is important to look towards the tangible issues of social capacities and their ability to deal with crime and policing within security governance ‘thinking’.

Firstly, the very existence of community organisations, groups and associations within the sample areas (often with similar cultural, political and social origins and ideologies) helped to provide a general ‘homogeneity’ to the sentiments of the community in which they were situated, as a collection of individual people. While it would be naive to assume that in identifying and dealing with crime and policing issues there was an absolute and unanimous community consensus regarding community self-direction for governing security, such organising was clearly something less than a collection of random and competing individuals. Thus, it led one community organisation to note this conception of ‘community’ in the context of security governance allowed for:

- communities to broadly organise on a structured basis;
- to provide a collective voice to community values;
- to articulate those collective view in a succinct and more formalised manner; and
- to allow communities to associate across a range of social, cultural and political boundaries to ‘triangulate’ values and provide strategic community direction on crime problems (I64).

Thus, in terms of community capacities to ‘problem solve’ at the local community level through such structures,

‘without the [community] volunteers, you’d be in dire straits. You need them, their back up and support...we [named organisation] couldn’t do without community groups, we couldn’t do without residents’ groups’ (I65).

Secondly, in terms of the framework provided for local security governing, an overwhelming driver for the organisation of social capacities was the long-term, strategic vision of respondents to utilise and provide social solutions to anti-community behaviours and issues. Away from the popular conceptions of ‘quick fix’ and ‘rough community justice’ associated with the paramilitarism (I52), responses reflected the fact that community organising was

‘a long term project. In the short term, it’s all the stuff [crime issues] we’re dealing with now...This is for a safer, better, stronger community, people representing and supporting each other...this is the future – strong residents’ groups, people giving leadership, providing a voice for those that are vulnerable’ (I55).

Thirdly, the fieldwork evidenced numerous benefits to be derived in areas where such organising existed in the context of solving local, community problems. Through the collective ‘voice’ provided by the variety of forms, groups and organisations within the sample areas, they had

‘helped influence...and played a significant role in solving problems or helping solve problems for local people. And again, the police have also been able to avail of the opportunity that [named organisations] create in that we have been contacted by the police, and make representations...’ (I1).

Furthermore, key actors such as politicians and community representatives played vital roles within these associative networks as ‘communication points’ about specific problems within and across social boundaries (I41). As the ‘power houses’ through which the ‘fluidity’ and innovation to solve local issues could be generated, key actors were also valuable sources of ‘accumulated experience’ in terms of knowing *how* to deal with problems; who should be involved at the community level; and what would be in the ‘best interests’ of the community (I9; I48).

It is also important to note that such key actors also assumed a preventative role with respect of anti-community behaviours. As individuals with myriad of social links, community resources and information channels bound up in their roles, one such respondent stated

‘I live in this area, the volunteers live in this area, so word gets round quickly. I think I have instilled a sort of fear...They [the community] think I know everybody, that I know all the paramilitaries – yeah, I do. They’re scared of me, but that’s a healthy thing...I know what’s going on in the community. People in the community would say ‘how do you know that?’ (I41).

So too in West Belfast, this inherent preventative capacity was explained insofar as

‘everybody knows everybody. *Nothing* can happen without someone else knowing. And we have workers like [name] who could tell you the name of *every* young person in [area] – so it’s impossible for anyone to do anything without someone knowing’ (I57).

Finally, with regard to social capacities and problem solving provided through the latent community infrastructures, it was the ‘embeddedness’ of community capacities within a broad range of social, rather than merely crime contexts which was the key to their potential as part of local problem solving. Addressing criminogenic issues within social, economic, environmental and housing contexts (I56), the breadth of social capacity and the ‘social reach’ provided a ‘tool kit’ for dealing with community problems. Thus, where one approach to problem solving was unsuccessful, alternative avenues were usually available through which problems could be managed, identified and appropriate bodies involved (I10; I54).

In spite of such social capacities and their potential to enable problem solving around anti-community behaviours, the findings did highlight distinct limitations within the wider context of community participation. Across both East and West Belfast, community respondents felt there was a ‘narrowing radius’ to their work within the communities in which they operated (due to what were seen as broader changes within modern society). In this regard, community organisations felt that statutory agencies had a certain degree of responsibility in terms of adequately resourcing such community-based capacities (I58). And within the specific context of security governing, it was strongly believed that PSNI had a role in both facilitating and supporting social capacities at the community level for their own benefit as well as the community’s. However, community groups perceived that it was a struggle to ‘educate’ PSNI (beyond the NPT level) on the importance of their work in governing security, the local infrastructure and capacities to problem solve

(I47). Thus, with PSNI 'blind' to opportunities to become truly involved in; understand the values of; and support social capacities to solve local problems, it was aptly stated that PSNI needed

'to be part of our society...what's it called? Social capital, with all the things that go into making social capital. They need to be a part of that, and they're not. They are an institution on the outside of society' (I51).

### 5.4.2 Community Capacity and Security Governance

Having explored the findings with regard to broad *social* capacities which may be seen to promote (and inhibit) the ability of communities to deal with crime and policing problems, it is now important to examine the findings in relation to more localised, *community* level factors. Indeed, the remainder of this section will evidence the findings in regard to community capacities as the practical ‘outworking’ of problem solving within the context of security governance.

A striking feature of the findings with respect to the ‘operationalising’ of community capacities to deal with criminogenic issues was the ability of key actors and organisations to adopt strategies of ‘responsibilisation’ attuned to local community context and values. As illustrated, such strategies were a

‘moral issue as far as [named group] is concerned, because it is dealing with people’s lives...and that’s what we’re telling people’ (I65).

Further reflected through the analogy of one RCO and their work in dealing with community problems through this ‘responsibilisation’ paradigm:

‘morally, I have a viewpoint on it [dealing with crime]...if you’re somebody’s parent buying them a carryout [alcohol] and dropping them off in our estate with their carryout, it’s your personal responsibility to your child...when it comes onto the streets it’s a responsibility for the community. Then it [related behaviour] does become an issue and that is where we come into conflict with parents who aren’t discharging *their* duties properly’ (I54).

Thus, it was the ability of community actors to frame crime and policing through this ‘responsibilisation’ strategy which helped to mediate the boundaries between community problem solving responsibility (within a security governance context) and PSNI responsibility (within a community policing context). As explained by an officer:

‘it’s them [community] realising first of all they have to realise it’s *their* areas where they live, and it’s their responsibility as well as the police to reduce crime in the area...’ (I16).

Looking beyond the ability of community actors to ‘frame’ problem solving capacities, their ability to mobilise community members to deal with local problems

was also a prominent. Outside the community infrastructures and social capacities in place, effective leadership to promote community action was a necessary prerequisite to provide direction in dealing with local problems. On the one hand, this was necessary to foment community capacities in that

‘there is little point in giving off or getting angry in the wake of an incident unless we are prepared to do something...every citizen has a question to answer – ‘are we going to be dictated to or put down...or are we going to stand together against this [community crime problems]?’ (I36).

On the other hand, effective problem solving was premised upon the ability of community leaders to articulate, advocate, represent and co-ordinate community capacities – something which only someone from the local community could do with any authority or legitimate community mandate (I47; I65). And where such essential ‘elements’ of ‘responsibilisation’, community responsibility and leadership were effectively managed, it helped to both isolate and target the perceived sources of community problems in that

‘the vast majority of people would support what we [named group] do. And normally those involved in what we’re challenging [crime/anti-community behaviour] would be our biggest objectors – you hear the squeals of the guilty being stifled in the throats of our supporters’ (I54).

Beyond the broad findings with regard to practical, community capacities within a security governance context, it must be noted such capacities were not evenly spread within the sample areas. It was generally recognised that within East and West Belfast, there were variable levels of: community infrastructure; capacities to respond and deal with local crime problems; dependence upon PSNI and non-state auspices of security; and the level of non-state security provision which could be mobilised (I39; 144; I60; I65). Thus, it is important to explore this variable landscape of community capacity in more detail.

Firstly, the issue of sectarian division within the sample areas may be seen to influence community capacities at the local level. Geographically, there were two ‘minority’ areas (or enclaves) within the sample areas – a Loyalist area called ‘Suffolk’ within West Belfast; and a Republican area called the ‘Short Strand’ within East Belfast. Thus, set against what was described as a ‘siege mentality’, both



enclaves had their own distinct sense of separateness, identity, problems and capacities in regard to the delivery of local security provision. However, it was the difference and division of these areas from the rest of the community in which they were situated (beyond issues of interface violence) which was beneficial to security governance capacities. Indeed, this ‘enclave environment’ acted as a lens through which positive conditions for dealing with crime and anti-community behaviour were actually magnified. From the identification and articulation of community norms, through to feelings of community responsibility and leadership, as illustrated within the East Belfast enclave,

‘the Short Strand is a total enclave on its own. It has a different mentality all of its own. They feel they’ve been isolated and surrounded, so they’ve developed a very strong community infrastructure...they’ve come up with their own kind of community safety measures to deal with things going in that community (I39).

In regard to Suffolk within West Belfast, ‘see when something goes wrong, the community all pull together and we all work for each other [to deal with issues]. It’s that siege mentality...a wee Loyalist area in West Belfast’ (I59).

Secondly, it was observed that in East Belfast there tended to be a much more ‘tribal’ and parochial character to community infrastructure (9I27; I45). In terms of this variegated body of ‘micro-security governance’ initiatives, it prevented community organisations forming into an effective ‘mass’ at the macro-community level and to deal with East Belfast-wide problems in a co-ordinated fashion (beyond the immediate remit of local initiatives). Unlike the more homogeneous ‘urban villages’ of West Belfast, with more co-ordinated and community-wide capacities and approaches to security governance, the insular approach adopted in East Belfast was summarised by a neighbourhood officer who felt

‘there’s a gap – the likes of my community centre, the likes of [named group], when working on something on a bigger scale, they tend to stick to their own smaller communities. It’s not for the wider picture’ (I25).

However, beyond issues related to the broad variability in community capacities to solve local community problems, the findings also evidenced a high degree of openness to outside influence in the promotion of local security

governance. Across both sample areas, a general consensus was that crime, as a problem embedded within social causes, could only be dealt with through a confluence of responses in that

‘all of us [in the community] have a responsibility to deal with...unacceptable behaviour – parents, police, justice agencies, educators, the media, public reps. All of us have a duty to bring about greater community safety’ (I50).

Indeed, there was an accepted need for multifaceted, open and transparent approaches to dealing with anti-community behaviours – which extended to an acceptance that in some cases, the police should be a necessary element of community capacities to solve problems. This was articulated by one organisation in terms of the need to be open to external influence insofar as

‘policing [by PSNI] has to be necessary tenet to community development. Without it, we will not be able to go very far as a community unit if you want to call it that...we should embrace the policing with the community ethos underpinning the work that we are doing’ (I1).

The findings also demonstrated that such ‘openness’ to external influence extended across, and as a bridge between organisations from Loyalist and Republican groups concerned with managing crime. With regard to developing solutions, sharing ‘best practice’ and promoting mutual learning, one Republican group noted that

‘we had the UDA and UVF up in the area [West Belfast] a couple of weeks ago and they came to see how things work and were impressed and looking to move it [work of Republican group] into their own areas. And we got asked to do a presentation...I think there is an appetite for it [work of Republican group] in Loyalist areas. It crosses religion, politics, class – the whole lot because it’s something that’s important, it’s adaptable’ (I54).

But in overview of the community determinants within security governance ‘thinking’, there is a distinct ubiquity to the ‘place’ of community structure in regard to problem solving. Indeed, ‘community’ within a security governance context simultaneously supplies the framework for, and mechanism to deal with, a variety of criminogenic and social problems. As an irreducible and complex social ‘fact’ within the sample areas, the findings would also suggest the use of community (and its capacities) can provide a valuable resource for state-based security provision.

Indeed, the findings would suggest that such capacities should be viewed in terms of their intrinsic, holistic 'value' for the broader concept of problem solving policing. And looking at the long-term 'value' for problem solving to promoting and maintaining cohesive, pro-active communities at the local level, it was simply noted

'these [crime] problems are probably *always* going to be with us. And the day or night we [as a community] say 'we're not going there because of that' is the day we'd be just as well packing up and getting a big TV on the wall' (155).

### **5.4.3 Local Capacities for Security Governance – Summary of Findings**

- social capacities strong because of solidarity generated as a result of the conflict which continues to help maintain low crime rates;
- Evolving nature of social solidarity from dealing with conflict related issues to ‘normal’ crime;
- Homogeneity of areas in terms of cultural, political and social ideologies and rationales which provide a focus for community sentiment;
- Local capacities characterised by: structured organising; collective community voice; articulation of community views in a clear and succinct manner; triangulation of community values and strategic community direction across a range of social, cultural and political boundaries;
- Long-term, strategic nature of vision of social capacities;
- Valuable place of key actors as communication points with expertise, experience and knowledge of how to deal with security governance matters in the best interests of the community;
- Embeddedness of social capacities in a range of social, economic, environmental and housing contexts;
- Need for PSNI to become part of the social capital which sustains such social capacities;
- Community capacities premised upon responsabilisation strategies to frame action and sentiment in line with local contexts;
- Community capacity provides the social framework support for all members of communities to stand against and help deal with anti-community behaviours;
- Strong propensity for organisations to articulate, provide advocacy, represent and co-ordinate, bolster by legitimacy for this activity through involvement of local community actors;

- High degree of openness to outside influences, to problem solving in conjunction with PSNI, as well as openness across cultural, social and political boundaries;
- Community capacities as a mechanism for insight into how problem solving is conducted at the community level through security governance activity.

## 5.5 Networked and Nodal Considerations

### 5.5.1 Networks in Security Governance

When interpreting the findings with regard to ‘networks’, they may be imagined as the ‘partnership framework’ between the myriad community groups, actors and agents who coalesce around criminogenic issues within the sample areas. Though far from simply ‘describing’ such networked partnerships within East and West Belfast on a geographical plain, it is important to consider the findings from a perspective that will account for the capacity of networks to manage social complexity; sustain community organising/relations; and their limits in facilitating community capacities within a security governance context.

In terms of networks as the framework within which to manage community-level partnerships, it was the underlying ‘relational’ qualities (as an ‘antidote’ to police-centric, hierarchical command structures) which were seen as valuable for local community organising. As a means of co-ordinating and linking a variety of capacities, resources and actors in relation to security provision, an example of such ‘networked thinking’ was demonstrated insofar as

‘PSNI on its own can’t deal with the problems. And the different parts of the [named forum, using a networking approach] bring their resources, and this is the way to go, to maximise. What you find in our society is that all these different agencies, they’re all in there, but they’re all working in silos. But they become effective when they...use their resources as part of a greater resource, so you get co-ordination and great focus in terms of objectives’ (I51).

Furthermore, networked approaches to partnership were considered as a less bureaucratic, more efficient means through which to transmit information between all the nodes (or members) of a network (I56). And in contrast to hierarchical, police-centric and ‘silo’ thinking on partnership working, a networked approach was perceived to be the most efficient way to organise communities and co-ordinate resources, thus providing an added value to resources beyond their individual capacities (I65).

Another issue was that networked approaches to partnership provided a framework for strategic and relational awareness *across* the sample areas. With networks as a means to effectively disseminate information ‘horizontally’ and ‘vertically’, such configurations allowed for informed and agreed decision making to be made within the network, rather than unilateral decisions being imposed upon any one or all of its members (I64). On one hand, this strategic and relational aspect to decision making was facilitated by the range of organisations which were brought together within a community setting. One such network within a Loyalist area comprised 60 organisations within its sphere, including (but not limited to) churches, residents’ association, the Orange Order and ex-paramilitaries – itself thought to bring stability to the community because of the ‘connectedness’ between such a diverse range of bodies embedded within that area (I1). On the other hand, beyond networked approaches as a means of facilitating ‘cultural density’ to community organising, on a practical level networked approaches also enabled compromise in that

‘the vast majority of community groups – 95%, are able to collaborate together...enable them to reign in their own ambitions about something and say ‘so and so does that type of thing better than we do, so they should be the ones [with primacy]. So we [as a network of community groups] have that understanding’ (I48).

However, it is apt at this point to note the rather amorphous nature of ‘networks’ from the findings. Returning to our ‘urban villages’ conception, networks of community organisations were not static entities *per se* to be measured, mapped and plotted in relation to their work on security provision at the community level. Indeed, their ability to adapt to the issues faced meant membership of a given networked configuration was neither temporally nor spatially fixed. As described by one organisation, within such fluid networked partnerships

‘we work with all statutory and voluntary organisations within [area] and we work for the benefit of this area. That is our main job...and we liaise with *anybody* that can help us do that – other community groups...’ (I41).

Furthermore, the basis for membership of a network by interested or ‘useful’ groups or agents was not restricted to geographical limits. On community-wide issues such as interface violence, parading, and anti-community behaviours more generally, networks often extended across social, political and cultural barriers to gain resources, knowledge or community capacities to deal with issues as required (I63). And as a means for networks to mobilise the appropriate members and actors around security governing, it was this amorphous, fluid dynamic to networked partnerships which allowed organisations access into virtually all community capacities and spheres of life. As illustrated by a prominent node within a network, from local community groups through to paramilitaries,

‘this forum has met with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to the Security Minister [Paul Goggins], with the Policing Board Chairman Des Rea...right across the spectrum [of work], we have engaged at *all* levels’ (I1).

In regard to the ‘mechanics’ of ‘getting things done’ through a networked partnership approach, a broad feature was the organic and informal nature of associations (I64). Though in order to ‘cut through’ the amorphous and subjective complexity to the co-ordination of actors and groups within a network, it was noted key ‘co-ordination points’ within networks were the most efficient means. Usually in the form of more advanced organisations or groups, such key points (as central to relations within and across networks) were often definitive sources of knowledge and influence – or what may be viewed as a ‘natural hierarchy’. As illustrated by one such network point: ‘whoever we need to work with, we can get contacts with any of them [community or statutory groups]’ (I52). And in another example, it was fascinating observation by one group in regard to anti-community behaviour and mobilising capacities to deal with them:

‘in East Belfast, all those dots in that map behind you [points to wall chart with 250 community organisations], I will probably know somebody in every one of those organisations, and there might be ten others [groups] in East Belfast who will...’ (I63).

In regard to ‘cutting through’ the complexity of networked partnership configurations and their ‘natural hierarchies’, the findings also unearthed ‘mini-



hierarchies' within networks, as a means of co-ordinating members and their activity, while providing self-direction and a degree of accountability within larger networks. From a PSNI perspective, the utility of these networked hierarchies was also valued. As noted by a neighbourhood Inspector,

'we're lucky in [area] because we have the [named group 1] who really are over, the umbrella for the whole of this area [approximately 30,000 population]. And those community groups such as [named group 2] and [named group 3] are part of the community safety sub-group of [named group 1]. So it's all housed within the one area and under the one command structure as such, for want of a better word' (I9).

And from a 'bottom-up' community perspective in providing a level of accountability within networked security governance, it was detailed that

'in terms of accountability we're [named group] involved in all the community infrastructure. I sit on the [named group 1] board, my colleague sits on the housing providers sub-group, also the community safety sub-group...I'm invited to the Upper Springfield stuff through my co-ordination role in Belfast...and everybody uses [named group 1] across the board – residents' groups, cops, Translink, community groups, schools...' (I54).

Though beyond the broad, structural aspects to networked partnerships the findings also evidenced important differences between the 'format' of information flows with regard to community activity across East and West Belfast. With networks as the fluid framework for activity, in East Belfast there was a tendency towards a centralised networked partnership. With one key umbrella group in the area (as a network in its own right), it acted as central point through which information could be relayed and disseminated to approximately 250 'weaker' nodes within the network. Indeed, this central node was described summarily by the majority of community respondents as 'the strongest networking organisation in terms of what they do in East Belfast' (I63). And below this, they too were the member of a 40-strong network of the more 'influential' nodes in East Belfast, including church bodies, statutory bodies, community groups, PSNI and paramilitaries who, on a monthly basis, meet to discuss and deal with local crime and social issues in the area (I32).

In West Belfast, the findings evidenced a more decentralised, autonomous nature to community-based networking in respect of security governance. Based again on the ‘urban villages’ conception (as noted above) this format allowed for the maintenance of local identities and norms while fostering co-ordination on a community-wide basis. In regard to this format and its impact on local security governance, it allowed for networked partnership based the ‘Upper Springfield Model’ – as a non-state network of community groups and statutory agencies including: Probation, Youth Justice Agency, Belfast City Council’s Community Safety Unit, Housing Executive, general housing providers, residents’ groups, Public Prosecution Service, Victim Support, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and PSNI (I55). This network of agencies involved in governing local security issues was itself conceived by an umbrella community organisation in West Belfast. Under the tentative approval of the NIO Justice and Security Minister, Paul Goggins, this concept (at the time of writing) was being rolled out across the main areas of West Belfast, again on an ‘urban village’ basis, then centrally co-ordinated on a strategic, West Belfast-wide basis.

To provide some context to the scale of such networking at the community level, this ‘Upper Springfield Model’ (as being set up in one area) had 22 affiliated residents’ associations representing a population of approximately 6,000 people (excluding any other statutory or community members and their links). And in another ‘urban village’ of West Belfast, at the community level the scheme co-ordinated a network of 14 residents’ associations representing approximately 22,000 people. Indeed, with these networks providing links for statutory agencies into massive populations, the ‘heads’ of these ‘networked urban villages’ themselves met at a strategic level, providing a multi-layered link within and across West Belfast and between a range of statutory and community bodies in a fluid format to mobilise capacities, community values and resources in the governance of local security issues (I55; I56; I65).

But taking a step back from the findings, the associative relations provided by the networked approaches to the governance of security were not without their limitations. When community-based networks exceeded what one respondent

described as a ‘critical mass’ without appropriate regulation or direction, they tended to develop a form of ‘community inertia’, becoming insular and ‘too comfortable’ with their work and user groups (I40; I58). Indeed, not all networks (or nodes within them) involved in local security provision wished to become (or could become) involved with the police (I19). At least in part, this was attributed to pockets of political (and sometimes paramilitary) power within networks (I44). Indeed, in West Belfast there were ongoing threats (at the time of writing) to Republican community groups engaging with PSNI on local crime issues. In this regard, it was a notable remark from one individual involved in a variety of overlapping networks governing security across the area that

‘alright, they [PSNI] are used to looking after their security, but I’m a Republican [engaging with PSNI] – I’m under as much threat from the coca-colas [RIRA] as they are’ (I54).

But in overview of the findings on networked security governance as a means of harnessing community capacities within a coherent framework, the complexity of scale, geography and organising, along with the amorphous nature of networks provides both solutions to and questions for police and state-centric conceptions of partnership working on crime and security issues. Though as succinctly remarked, such networked partnership approaches to security governing

‘in a way has created a loose model of ‘community network development’. It’s far from perfect, but it is quite good. And I think that one of the issues is joining up the dots. And I think that would be true of all communities, that you...need to be able to join up the dots and *see* the various bits and pieces’ (I58).

### 5.5.2 Nodes in Security Governance

Looking beyond the networked partnership approach to security governance, attention shall now turn to the ‘members’ of such networks, or the nodes – as the sites of activity which simultaneously give character to, and generate vitality within networks. Exploring nodes in terms of their abilities to generate order; to effect relations; and provide innovative solutions and links at the community level within security governance ‘thinking’, the findings will thus provide a ‘working definition’ and interpretation to such nodal capacities within the sample areas.

To extend the concept of ‘mini-hierarchies’ within networks, it was clear from the findings that not all nodes within East and West Belfast were equal in terms of their capacities or influence. Indeed, with ‘lead’ nodes as a prerequisite to generating and fomenting self-direction and leadership within networks, the character of such nodes was often determined by the members who comprised it or the professionalism of their work. At a general level, such ‘character’ ranged from purely voluntary, residents’ groups and single issues organisations through to professional, funded organisations with paid employees delivering services and co-ordinating ‘weaker’ nodes across communities (I8). Indeed, the natural (and physical) leadership provided by some nodes was evident, with ‘nodal leader’ within a loose network of 250 community-based groups noting:

‘what you have in this areas is very good group [node] which has lots of things underneath it...they would be a good central hub there...[name] will complement the bits that everyone else is doing, filling the gaps, or developing new areas of working which no one else has the time or resources to do’ (I40).

As part this variable ‘field’ of nodal relations, a number of issues emerged with regard to the position of the ‘weaker’ nodes working within local networks. Firstly, such nodes (under the self-direction of lead nodes) generally tended to operate in a supportive manner in terms of the capacities they possessed for issues that needed to be addressed in a locale (I55). Thus, with no strict or minimum criteria to govern such ‘holistic alliances’, the lead nodes were in a position to co-ordinate nodal capacities in that ‘the smaller groups that would be kind of struggling

and very localised...these forums [lead nodes] would be there to pull those in' (I58). Secondly, this flexible approach to nodal relations (and the capacities they brought) allowed the weaker nodes to channel their local (and contextual) knowledge and capacities within the objectives (and regulation) of the lead nodes. As illustrated through the approach of one organisation:

'the structure – any residents' group can be involved in it. Obviously, you have to sign up because there's policy, and procedures and guidelines...we agree with them to become part of the [named group] and they would look after their own area...we allow people to define the boundary of their own community in that sense' (I60).

Thirdly, such lead nodes provided a level of leadership for the development of relationships with 'outside' agencies involved in security provision. As stated in one example,

'I'm happy enough we're letting the community know we can say we're working with these people [PSNI]. And someone has to take the lead, and someone has to set the community an example. If you start saying 'we're working with the police and we're confident in them', I think it'll filter down to the general community' (I41).

With lead nodes further denoting a responsibility to build such external relations between nodes and statutory agencies (I65), this facilitated an efficient, multi-layered approach to engagement and relationship building between the police and the majority of nodes within a network, as multiple contact points into the social fabric of communities. And as part of the long-term 'public good' in regard to nodal relations with PSNI, lead nodes were further seen as vital insofar as 'the police need to look to the community sector to secure the future links into the community' (I49).

Moving away from the organisational and relational aspects of nodal security governance, it is also important to examine the innovative contributions which nodes can make to policing more generally, as sites of 'community power' in local security provision. One of the discernable features was that nodes, as situated within and working for communities therefore

'deal with *everyday* issues...and that model, that's setting *policing* in context. It's setting them [PSNI] alongside...all the agencies that affect our lives around one table' (I51).

With nodes in this sense providing a common conceptual platform through which policing and security issues important to communities may be prioritised, identified contextualised, this was indicative of the ‘embeddedness’ of nodes within communities. As intimated by one lead node within a network of 20 ‘sub-nodes’ who dealt with a variety of social and criminogenic issues:

‘we have crèche facilities, after school clubs, young peoples’ groups on a range of issues...young men’s and women’s groups...so we’ve a finger on the pulse of *every* aspect of community life. Many people would say this centre is the heartbeat of the community’ (I42).

Thus, with nodes as a natural and rich source of information on community life and potential crime, criminality and anti-community behaviours, such nodal capacities occupied a privileged position in that it was believed

‘cops need to take it [local security governing] seriously. Because see *anything* that you want to know about [area], somebody from [named group] will tell you, and that’s who done what to who, when they did it, what they did it with and how they got away – and *that’s* what policing is about’ (I53).

It was for precisely this reason that nodes were viewed as pivotal in the transition to, and as a conduit for collaborative working between police and communities within security governance ‘thinking’. Using nodes as the ‘community-medium’ through which to facilitate a movement away from police-centric ‘thinking’ on policing:

‘I suppose you find in the past people would have been saying ‘this is happening, that’s happening, that’s the peelers fault, the peelers didn’t do this and that properly’...now we can say this is not a police issue, that’s social services. Or people round the table saying you’re here and you’re here, this is your problem, how are you going to deal with it? It’s brilliant how it’s happening’ (I56).

Furthermore, in terms of validating security governance direction and grounding ‘mentalities of order’ in the communities within which nodes were situated, self-critical and self-reflective capacities were often evident. From local crime surveys (I47) to public meetings (I52), there was a distinct emphasis on the need to ground the work of community groups (as nodes) in the views of the community at the

micro-level (I60). As summarily noted by one community group (as a lead node) in regard to security governing and policing generally,

‘we need to report, record and evaluate that relationship between the community and the police...that will develop the community as well. Because it will give you a critical analysis of what we’re doing and what we could be doing better and also hopefully enable the police to look at themselves and critique how they do things’ (I1).

Another feature of nodal organising was the ‘democratic’ character to nodes in East and West Belfast as part of their culture of working. Far from discrete sets of (paramilitary linked) decision makers imposing their mentalities of rule within their spheres of influence, ‘community consensus’ was viewed as key to an effective mandate for security governing capacities. As reflected by one respondent,

‘basically, we identify community need in partnership with people, then try and develop programmes on some of those needs, usually in partnership with the statutory bodies and other voluntary groups where appropriate. And then kind of lobbying work on behalf of the people in the area too’ (I48).

With many of the community-based groups governed by management boards (themselves comprised of other independent local actors) providing strategic aims, objectives and targets for their work, nodes could not be viewed as random, self-interested collections of reactionary ‘busy bodies’ responding to ‘pet interests’ (I40). Thus, at the core of this democratic character to nodal working was a desire by nodes to provide transparency and accountability to their work, while constantly providing feedback to the community in which they were situated (I65).

However, it must be highlighted that nodes, as sites of community power and sentiment were not without their limitations in promoting transparent security governance initiatives as a co-operative ‘public good’ between police and community-based security provision. This point was made by one community worker, who, in reference to potential paramilitary influences or links noted

‘you’ve still people in the community *today* who are still totally paranoid and see the police as a threat – but those people can influence communities and that’s when it becomes difficult’ (I38).

From a police perspective, a Superintendent stated that in attempts to engage with certain nodes involved in local security provision,

‘there’s still a lot of suspicion of the police there, still probably due to paramilitary links and involvement, affecting the willingness to engage with police, even at my level. And it would be choreographed that if I go [to meet named groups], the paramilitary reps don’t go, and information would have to be relayed to me through a third party, so there is still a long way to go’ (I67).

Though fundamentally for PSNI and their links to nodes (and networks) in communities previously detached from state-based policing, it was an apt remark by a community group ‘on the outside’ of state policing that

‘we’re unique in the sense that we had no [state] policing. So we would bring the experience of how to work [outside state policing] and we would learn how to work with the police...I definitely see a role there’ (I52).

In overview of the findings on nodal conceptions of security governance, they have evidenced the complex sets of capacities, mentalities of order and rules which comprise nodes as sites of security provision embedded within communities. From an objective PSNI view point, this was recognised in that

‘there’s so many different permutations and calculations, it really is a minefield at times who you’re dealing with and where they sit. But in all honesty, they’re all going towards the same objective at the end of the day – they all want a better place and a safer place for all the community to live in, and that doesn’t be missed really [sic]’ (I9).

And in regard to the unique ‘place’ of community organisations as nodes concerned with governing local security, their role was succinctly captured insofar as ‘the *question* of whether the police should be charged with doing everything on the ground is the wrong perspective – there needs to be an emphasis on the community level’ (I60).



### **5.5.3 Networked and Nodal Considerations – Summary of Findings**

- Relational qualities of networks as key to co-ordinating and linking capacities, resources and actors in regard to security/policing provision;
- Networks less bureaucratic than hierarchies, with efficiency of working providing added value to resources beyond their individual capacities;
- Networks have strategic and relational awareness across areas, facilitating vertical and horizontal information flows;
- Cultural and social density and connectedness of networks provides stability, legitimacy and collaborative basis for working;
- Fluid nature of network membership, neither spatially nor temporally fixed;
- Key nodes in networks as vital for co-ordinating and forming natural hierarchies;
- Reach of networks, with coverage and linkages across large populations;
- Network composition ranging from community bodies through to statutory agencies, providing links for variety of ‘outside’ agencies into community fabric regarding criminogenic issues;
- Lead nodes as gateways into networks for outside agencies and groups;
- Supportive role of weaker nodes for local issues requiring co-ordinated networked approach;
- Collective embeddedness of nodes in social fabric of areas, providing a rich collective source of information on local security governance matters;
- Nodes as a community medium through which to mediate between police and communities on local issues outside police-centric language and thinking;
- Self-critical, reflective, accountable and proactive nature of nodal activity, with emphasis on building community consensus on local issues;
- Unique perspective of nodes in bringing non-state policing experience to the table.

## 5.6 The Nature of Security Governance in Northern Ireland

Having explored the findings on security governance with regard to context, devolved nature, networks and community determinants, the final area to examine is that of the ‘nature’ of security governance, or its broad delivery. As the ‘operational face’ to local security capacities and provision, the findings will evidence their delivery as bound up in a variety of factors, including: their objectives; the tradition of ‘sorting things out’; the alternative contexts to state provision of security; and attitudes to delivery from police and Government. Indeed, beyond merely detailing security governance activities *per se* (see *Appendix A*), the following section will provide an insight into the roles and rationales of non-state security provision within East and West Belfast.

As part of the basic ‘diversity’ to security ‘otherness’ within the sample areas, a key tenet to the delivery of non-state security provision is its grounding in

‘a very diverse group of people...some very politically motivated groups, some very socially motivated groups – it’s a complete mixed bag. And their level of engagement with the police will vary quite widely’ (I36).

Within this ‘mixed bag’ to the delivery of local security provision, an essential element was also ‘people making a commitment to do it, and people caring about their own community and people saying ‘this is my community’...It definitely does work’ (I59). Though beyond these basic prerequisites of a diverse and motivated community, the findings will outline a number of fundamental aspects to security ‘otherness’.

Developing out of the politics of the Troubles and the separation of Nationalist/Republican (and to a lesser extent Loyalist/Unionist) communities from state-based justice and policing, many of the respondents conducted their local security provision based on a ‘negative consent’ paradigm. With anti-state sentiment acting as a signifier and referent around which non-state, community-based security provision was legitimated – ‘nobody contacted the police or worked with the police, or very few people did. These issues [local criminality] were dealt with *in* the community’ (I42). It was also recognised that at least in the post-Patten era, more community-based organisations were prepared to (and were) increasing their

engagement with PSNI on crime issues (I23). However, it was the effectiveness of non-state security provision in the past which appeared to perpetuate its legitimacy and primacy in the present. As noted by one RCO:

‘policing outside the formal structures of policing...then [pre-January 2007] it would have been seen as a safer place to live. There wouldn’t have been as many break-ins then or cars stolen...it would have been relatively safe in terms of muggings, robberies – there wasn’t that sort of fear. Some of that has changed in the last two years [for the worse]’ (I53).

However, the ubiquitous provision of local, community-based security outside that of the state (often compared with the ‘effectiveness’ of paramilitarism) was perceived to be a *de facto* security role which PSNI had yet to fill as part of the new post-2007 political dispensation. In this regard, crime control through the paramilitaries was

‘a quick fix scenario – put them out of the country, curfew them, beat them, shoot them. So that’s been replaced now with the police [PSNI] – so peoples’ expectations of proper policing are probably too high’ (I52).

Beyond what may be viewed as the community aspiration for quick and effective policing, the ‘flog them’ and ‘hang them’ (I46) mentality engendered through previous ‘regimes’ had resulted in a number of more subtle consequences for community organisations concerned in delivering local security provision. On one level, what was for many a lack of *any* state or paramilitary policing within the sample areas left respondents generally noting ambivalence at the community level as to who dealt with local criminality. As articulated by one organisation:

‘there’s a palate out there for that [paramilitary justice] because people are getting so frustrated [at the lack of state policing]. They’re saying ‘I don’t give a fuck who hits them, as long as somebody’s hitting them, stopping it. So they [the community] don’t care if it is institutional beatings they get from the cops or whoever, or community beatings’ (I54).

And on another level, this ambivalence was further compounded by the ingrained (political and paramilitary) culture of separateness between communities, community groups and state policing across the sample areas. In terms of even basic co-operation between sections of community and the police (even in 2008), one group noted

‘there’s still a big element of that ‘if we go to the police, it’s still touting’. That would be one of the main things we’re doing [educating], it is protecting the community’ (I47).

In regard to this ‘conflicted security context’, community groups at the forefront of delivering local security governance initiatives which overlapped with PSNI also had to

‘tread a fine line between being able to do our job within the community and being able to uphold the law. We’ve got a fine line to tread, and we’ve got to have a relationship with communities. If you’re seen as an organisation or group of organisations that are police informers, you wouldn’t exist and this place would be burnt to the ground. We may well see crime... [but] to survive you’ve got to keep quiet to a certain extent’ (I63).

Though moving beyond the context and engendered mentalities as to the delivery of alternative security provision, the findings uncovered a number of other characteristics to the local governance of security as shall now be explored.

Firstly, an overwhelming feature to the delivery of such local initiatives at the community level (see *Appendix A*) was the primacy of their position and capacities. In this regard, neighbourhood officers recognised the distinctive difference between the official ‘police line’ in *dealing* with crime, and the pragmatic ‘community line’ in *solving* crime (I12). As summarised by one officer,

‘where we’re not getting anywhere down the police line, we go the community reps and they’re able to have a fair idea who it is, and have a word in the right ears, and those things being solved. I’m not saying it is us wiping our hands off it or passing it onto them to sort it out. But the bottom line is when there’s a problem...if we [PSNI] can’t solve it, they [community] can’ (I25).

Secondly, it was the holistic nature to security provision (as a means to delivering crime control grounded in the social fabric of communities) which made it so effective and popular. With a belief from respondents that the conflict had effectively ‘camouflaged’ many of social factors which can lead to criminality (such as deprivation and disadvantage) (I39), it was their ability to identify and deal with such factors without recourse to state criminal justice avenues which gave them their ‘edge’. As noted:

‘to me, people are phoning us to deal with stuff rather than phoning the police...because we’ll find a way of dealing with it. Sometimes people don’t *see* the situation a child is in – they just see the crime and the consequences of it...it’s trying to find ways of dealing with it without punishment beatings, or dragging them through the courts...its local knowledge again’ (I59).

Thirdly, for those organisations whose delivery of security provision was premised upon providing a ‘parallel’ service to that of PSNI because of continuing legitimacy issues, they had built up a significant ‘user group’ reliance within their locale. This was highlighted by one group who felt

‘they [PSNI] don’t realise how much people rely on it [named group’s work]. And once people start to rely on something, I mean, if they take this project away for example, who are people going to go to? They’ll [community] be up in arms, and they’ll see and increase in anti-social behaviour not being reported – not being reported *anywhere* and then it’ll be out of control. We’re actually nipping it [criminality] in the bud at the minute’ (I65).

The findings also indicated that the primacy of community organisations in delivering ‘policing’ also extended into many practical and operational aspects of the PSNI’s own work across East and West Belfast. As contended by one group in regard to PSNI:

‘they almost *expect* us to do their job for them through our work, that’s the whole mindset of them – ‘they’re doing it, that’s alright, it saves us the bother and paperwork...I feel I keep my area quiet for them [PSNI]’ (I59).

Furthermore, neighbourhood officers recognised that in the majority of low level crime related issues, ‘the groups are in a better place than I am to find out what’s going on in their community than what we [NPT] can do’ (I20). Using the example of a public order situation, another officer stated ‘the first people that are contacted are community reps...nine times out of ten they can sort it’ (I4). And in reference to interface violence, another community group noted

‘it would be far harder for them [PSNI] to do their job if we weren’t here, *especially* the interface stuff...nobody knows how much effort goes into making like that [peaceful]. We always said if we stopped all of our interface work, their job would be ten times harder’ (I47).

Thus, beyond the capacity for community organisation to maintain a degree of social control within their respective communities, the findings would also indicate that PSNI resources would be further stretched if it were not for community structures and the delivery of local security provision. And fundamentally for the overall management of crime within East and West Belfast, the primacy (as noted) of community groups in delivering services, projects, initiatives and responses to low level criminality and quality of life issues acted as a 'buffer' to PSNI's provision of policing (I54; I57). Here, the largely preventative, holistic approaches of community-based security governance on one level delivered a service directly to the community; and on another level, such activity indirectly supported and supplemented the service provided by PSNI, restricting the volume of criminality to fewer (if more serious) issues, allowing more effective, concentrated police resourcing where it was needed most (I52).

In regard to the delivery of an overarching security governance paradigm within the sample areas, there were a number of issues raised by respondents in regard to perceptions of their work. With PSNI focused upon *police* rather than police *and* community capacities as part of community policing (I17), there was little organisational recognition or understanding within PSNI of locally delivered security provision beyond the immediacy of NPT knowledge. In regard to the general understated importance of such community activity as a 'fourth service', it is unsurprising that one frustrated group stated

'I think it's just madness – here you've got vibrant communities...yet we [as a society] don't see the potential in using those people, using those people to design engagement with the police' (I38).

Beyond the immediacy of operational policing, the findings also uncovered a number of important social and political benefits associated with the delivery of local security governance. At a basic level, the provision of policing by community groups played an important mediating role between 'hard to reach' Republican and Loyalist communities and the PSNI. As illustrated by one group,

'they [community members] come here and we say 'you need to pass that onto the police, and one or two will say no. But then out of that, if we

explain why they should go to the police, then that's maybe down to one' (I52).

Furthermore, with many community groups as the primary providers of services with regard to local criminality and anti-community behaviours (as noted above), they were viewed as 'stepping-stone' in the transition for communities away from paramilitarism and towards mainstream policing solutions. This was articulated by one Republican group, who, in the course of their recent co-operation with PSNI in the delivery of their service stated

'people do still have reservations, and I mean, groups like ourselves – people still find it more comfortable to come to people like us and ask us to act as intermediaries and work out problems for them rather than go directly to the police' (I56).

On the one hand, an interesting question was raised in regard to the long-term utility of locally delivered security provision as peripheral or parallel to that of PSNI. In this respect:

'the question is where is the normative aspect of that taking us? Is it taking us away from shall we say the negative power models, or is it entrenching those as the way communities will continue to operate?' (I64).

Though on the other hand, the absolute necessity of locally administered and delivered security provision at the community level was a common theme to this 'normalcy agenda' debate for a number of reasons. Firstly, the continued efforts of local communities to organise and provide responses to crime outside that of the PSNI was viewed as a direct response to the lack of 'normality' to crime within communities. Here, one organisation summarily noted

'I do think among Government and Stormont, I think there's a growing nonsense that says the war is over now and everything is peaceful now and everything is about developing a normal society...normal society is a long way off' (I57).

Secondly, in delivering local community-based responses to crime, security governing outside the state undoubtedly mediated the changing dynamic to PSNI

provision of policing, and the ‘gap’ left through a reduction in paramilitary control within communities. This was reflected in the comment of one group who noted

‘I had a conversation with people [paramilitaries] who were trying to get it [interface violence] stopped, and the young fellas who were doing it were telling them [paramilitaries] to take themselves off...and that’s because there’s no fear of the IRA or UVF anymore. So I think that’s a big issue for communities throughout Belfast’ (I63).

Though paradoxically, in view of the perceived absence of effective policing by PSNI (as above) across the sample areas, there was a perceived *increase* in pressure being put on paramilitaries to tackle low-level crime and anti-community behaviours. As illustrated:

‘the police aren’t doing *anything*, and I was speaking to an ex-combatant and he says to me ‘people are coming to your door and saying you need to do something’. That’s more than it ever was before. But it is bigger than neighbourhood policing, and it is bigger than policing – it is the courts, the criminal justice system’ (I41).

In overview of the findings on the broad delivery of security governance activities, the nature of this ‘community service’ is shaped by a complex mix of social, political, historical and practical dynamics. With the ‘tradition’ of non-state policing also evident through the range of activities and initiatives delivered at the community level (see *Appendix A*), the findings would suggest a need by PSNI and Government to re-evaluate the ‘place’ of less conventional security capacities offered. Thus, within the broader context of delivering community-oriented security provision which encompasses *all* viable providers, the findings would indicate that both PSNI and communities need to re-calibrate and re-evaluate their roles, rationalities and mentalities of rule – and how that can be delivered as an overarching ‘public good’. Or what could more accurately be described as the confluence of community policing and the governance of security through the concept of ‘community governance policing’.



### **5.6.1 The Nature of Security Governance – Summary of Findings**

- Significant diversity to security provision through range of actors involved at the community level;
- Security governance activity predicated upon local responsibility and ownership of areas;
- Security governance as developed out of necessary alternative policing required throughout the conflict;
- Post-Patten increase in co-operation (and willingness to co-operate) of non-state security auspices with PSNI;
- Justification of effectiveness of security governance based upon comparisons with slow PSNI responses to community issues;
- Security governance activity as filling the void left by lack of state or paramilitary policing within sample areas;
- Community-based security governing as a mediator between policing and communities, mitigating paramilitary influences;
- Primacy of community-based security provision in dealing with local issues, recognised by PSNI officers within locales;
- Holistic and social embeddedness of security governance highly effective in dealing with social issues generated by the conflict, providing diversions from formal CJS responses;
- Significant levels of community reliance upon local security governing;
- Expectance within PSNI local ‘policing’ provision will do their work for them and a belief that local security governing activity is better placed to deal with local issues;
- Acceptance within PSNI that policing would be significantly more difficult if it were not for local security governance contribution;
- Security governance activities as largely preventative and holistic in nature;
- Limited organisational understanding or acceptance of non-state policing provision;

- Security governance activity as a mediator between PSNI and hard-to-reach communities and groups over policing issues;
- Necessity of local non-state security governance because of continuing cultural, political and social abnormality to society and policing matters;
- Security governance provision as actively suppressing paramilitary policing activity;
- Security governance activity as delivering on 23 issues across broad policing areas of: restorative justice; mediation; prevention partnerships; emergency response; education/prevention; and advocacy (see *Appendix A*).

## **6.0 Conclusions – Towards Community Governance Policing**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Having documented and interpreted the data gathered for community policing and the governance of security, it is now important to provide an analysis of, and conclusions to, the data in line with the broader aims and objectives of the thesis, along with the research questions. The purpose of this concluding section is to analyse the salient issues and themes evidenced from the research, while juxtaposing that analysis against existing literature and ‘thinking’ – in effect, ‘closing the loop’ on the inductive research methodology.

As part of that analysis, this chapter will explore the implications of the findings for the concept of Community Governance Policing (CGP). With CGP essentially about taking conceptions of policing and security outside that of traditional police-centric language, it is about placing that ‘thinking’ within the plural, multi-dimensional reality of policing and security provision which comprises the sample areas of this research. This in turn will raise issues for PSNI policy direction in regard to Policing with the Community, while considering new possibilities for the inclusion of alternative and additional policing resources available as part of CGP within East and West Belfast.

The chapter will be broken down into five distinct sections, as follows:

- Accountability and CGP;
- Empowerment and CGP;
- Partnership and CGP;
- Problem Solving and CGP;
- Service Delivery and CGP.

Each of these sections will provide a combined analysis of the data and interpretation derived from the fieldwork regarding community policing and the governance of security. Analysing the corresponding sections of both areas as the basis for CGP,

the chapter will examine the emergent issues and policy directions. It will conclude by answering the original research questions (as outlined in the introduction), along with the contribution to knowledge.

## 6.2 Accountability and Community Governance Policing

### 6.2.1 Emerging Issues

When considering accountability as part of CGP ‘thinking’, an important precursor to imagining new conceptions of accountable *policing* (rather than just police work) is the need for consensus on the issues which constitute accountability in regard to policing and security matters. Indeed, little attention has been paid in the literature to the differences between accountable policing as defined by the police, and accountability for local security governing (as defined at the community level) beyond police-centric methods of consultation and feedback (Bayley and Shearing, 1996; Brogden, 2005). Thus, with accountability tending to be situated within, and generated by police organisations themselves, accountability considerations for broader conceptions of policing and security governing have been limited and at best, incoherent (Kappeler and Kraska, 1998).

From a PSNI perspective, accountability for community policing is about their *obligation* to meet Policing Board targets, reduce specific crimes and provide tangible indicators of that which they achieved. In contrast, accountability for community-based security governance is premised upon organisations fulfilling their *social responsibility*, as the voice, conscience and focal points of consensus in the community to provide solutions to problems. As the research would suggest, accountability within a CGP context is about holding all bodies to account in terms of their obligation *and* responsibility to contribute to criminogenic problems as defined at the local, community level and within local contexts.

As part of this broader conception of accountability under the CGP banner, a further issue given little attention in the literature is that of *developing* accountability within communities as bound up in the conceptions of community policing’s consensual style (Topping, 2008a, 1999; Mulcahy, 2006). As the research would strongly suggest, for the PSNI to claim it is accountable to communities by virtue of their Policing with the Community policy; meeting externally drafted targets under the Policing Plan; and ‘listening’ to needs through the DPPs, it is little more than a

veneer. Indeed, accountability for policing and security governance activity is not something which can be readily manufactured or implanted at the community level.

As evident, accountability of the PSNI for their work needs to be about a participatory, relational approach which begins with individual officers at the neighbourhood level. In this regard, accountable policing is as much about officers being seen to be working with the community; exploring alternative and innovative ways of working with communities and their organisations; and (attempting to) break down barriers with hard-to-reach sections of the community. Thus, accountability for CGP is about PSNI moving beyond the traditional, managerial ‘box-tick’ terms of solving ‘officially’ defined crime problem (Wycoff, 1988; Fielding and Innes, 2006).

From a community perspective, developing accountability for broad policing and security governance activity is about all stakeholders (including PSNI) engaging on community terms, according to local community norms, organising and structures. A failure of the police accountability literature has been its general inability to conceive ‘community’ as anything other than collections of individuals and groups who may or may not be willing to engage and interact with the police on crime issues (Bradley, 1998; Brogden, 2002). But as the research has shown, there has been an overwhelming desire from the majority of community organisations involved in local security governing to work with PSNI and hold them to account. However, what is also evident is that such a ‘process’ of engagement to develop local police-community accountability must be conducted through pre-existing community structures – for communities to feel involved in the process of building accountability for CGP on their terms, enhancing notions of procedural and substantive accountability for stakeholder activity (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003).

On a more subtle plain, it is a notable that the term accountability within a CGP context cannot be defined too rigidly. Returning to the notion of accountability as social responsibility rather than obligation to ‘do’ police work, it was the broad coalescence of social, economic and cultural capacities through community structures which enhanced the ‘reach’ of accountability to a range of stakeholders rather than detracted from that which PSNI were responsible for. Furthermore, in

adopting a CGP-based approach to accountability, not only is the relational and participatory basis for policing and security enhanced, but so too is the mutual recognition of limitations for activities within acceptable legal norms *and* social parameters (Kempa and Shearing, 2005).

However, in spite of the mutual benefits to be gained from a CGP approach to accountability, a number of issues emerged from the research, which tended to limit any such potential re-orientation in ‘thinking’ from the PSNI perspective. Firstly, beyond a narrow band of neighbourhood officers, a sizeable degree of inertia within PSNI has stifled the potential for officers more generally to see accountability for police work beyond their current understanding. With cynicism and distrust of community members and bodies, viewed by many officers as linked to former (and current) paramilitary regimes, it is understandable that PSNI do not wish to replicate in their own activities, the deviant or suspect (Fielding, 2005). However, such attitudes are generally based upon stigma and supposition, limiting the potential for various non-police interpretations of accountability for policing and security (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005).

Secondly, and fundamental to the limitation of CGP accountability is the PSNI’s concentration upon technical and procedural, rather than relational and participatory approaches to accountability. With a managerial belief within PSNI that accountability should be based upon statistical measures, accountability has essentially been reduced to an artificial measure of the interaction between crimes which can be measured, and aggregates of those measures which can be ‘sold’ to communities as an account of police ‘successes’ (Waddington, 1999). As identified, such is the reliance upon technical and statistical accounting for police work that accountability has been reduced to a product of the spreadsheets documenting activity. Indeed, the current PSNI accountability regime has stymied innovation; promoted error avoidance; and provided a ‘get-out’ clause for PSNI managers because they were delivering upon targets which represent everyone, but account for no one’s priorities at the local level (Stenning, 2000; Lilley and Hinduja, 2006b; Garcia, 2005).

Thirdly, the DPPs, as arbiters of the success or failure of PSNI in meeting targets have further limited the extent to which proactive state and non-state responsibility for policing and security can be considered. With these ‘statistical talking shops’ concerned with little more than accountability as based upon percentages, resources and political ‘one-upmanship’, they actually create barriers to engagement with communities and community structures involved in local security provision (Mulcahy, 2006; Topping, 2008b). Furthermore, the DPPs actually promote critical, rather than constructive criticism of PSNI activity, wrongly educating communities that accountability is a ‘statistical product’.

In many respects, the reliance upon statistics as *the* accountability measure for police work fails to educate the wider community as to how community policing (as the supposed core to PSNI’s policing style) may be imagined, further skewing expectations of what the police can deliver on the ground. While local neighbourhood officers are appreciative of the contributions made by non-state organisations to local crime and anti-community issues, at a managerial level this is actively ignored. Thus, PSNI currently enjoy the benefits of non-state contributions, as a *de facto* additional policing resource without acknowledging or accounting for it (Wood *et al.*, 2008). In this regard, there has been an implicit failure by PSNI to acknowledge the de-centred nature of security provision within the sample areas – competing to be chiefly accountable for crime issues within a bigger picture of CGP of which they are but one component among many who could and should be factored in accountability processes.

On a more pragmatic level, a significant feature of the research is the democratic and accountable character of local community structures within the sample areas. With a cohesive, well-organised and strategic ability to identify, deal with and respond to crime and anti-community behaviours, these structures provide a direct line of accountability between communities and a variety of statutory organisations (including PSNI). Further providing a focus for community sentiment and bringing together community stakeholders and capacities, they provide a crucial channel for critical and constructive dialogue within and between stakeholders – in effect, increasing accountability by reducing the social distance between the



aspirations of PSNI (and other statutory organisations) to reduce crime and the reality of how policing should be delivered on the ground from a community perspective. With PSNI generally failing to utilise such local accountability structures which routinely deal with crime and anti-community behaviours, it has limited their social 'reach' into community resources and provide a tailored, locally accountable policing service (Black, 2000).

In overview of the emerging issues of accountability and CGP, it is clear that the beneficial linkages between the PSNI and community structures have yet to be properly exploited. Under the current regime, PSNI are essentially accountable unto themselves, with the successes and failures of their work based upon the gleanings from aggregated targets and reported crime – not the direct demands and desires of the community as formulated and identified by their stakeholders and structures – or those at the 'coalface' of security governing (Fielding and Innes, 2006; Brogden, 2006). It is therefore appropriate to now explore the policy directions through which PSNI and communities within the sample areas can move towards a broader, community-anchored vision of accountability.

### 6.2.2 Policy Directions

As part of moving towards accountability within a CGP framework, an essential element must be the PSNI's willingness to 'see' communities in terms of their properties which may *add* to and strengthen the existing structures and measures of police accountability. Indeed, the strength and organising of civil society within the sample areas must be viewed as a quality to be embraced in terms of supplementing consensual and participatory approaches to policing (O'Mahony *et al.*, 2000; Acheson and Milofsky, 2008). In this respect, CGP accountability is about creating the inclusive conditions for shared, collective responsibility around policing matters (Milward and Provan, 2000).

With accountability for policing and security governance matters also bound up with the 'collective community consciousness' provided through community structures, PSNI need to further embrace the social and democratic aspects to accountability as a factor which is just as viable as the statistical reality upon which they are currently judged. And with CGP accountability as a 'public good' which can generate outreach, consent, legitimacy and democratic decision making for policing matters between the police and communities, the findings would suggest that accountability needs to be judged as much upon levels of community inclusion in police decisions as it is about the exclusion of crime from the streets (Johnston and Shearing, 2003).

In many respects, it is evident that the PSNI have little time for the community in their community policing rhetoric (Friedmann, 1994). Thus, there is a clear need for senior PSNI management to grasp the value of genuine, personal relations between individual officers and local communities as 'small steps' accountability development. In part, this must begin with PSNI, the NIPB and DPPs breaking out of their current autopoietic cycle of accountability and allow local officers the autonomy to work with the grain of local, community-based norms and values (Bayley, 1988; Brogden, 1999).

Firstly, through the police expanding their accountability 'vocabulary' to recognise and represent the diverse ways in which policing and security is viewed, an *accurate* rather than *aggregate* picture of accountability may be developed. Through

the PSNI more effectively exploiting the pre-existing community infrastructures to provide a 'social layer' to their work, there is a unique opportunity for PSNI and communities to circumvent general social apathy surrounding policing (Grinc, 1994). With locally, largely democratic and representative community structures readily receptive to policing matters, in policy terms, it is a better premise for accountability than the 'gleanings' from a few interested individuals, or the 'respectable' public (Brogden, 2006).

Secondly, beyond the limited nature of statistics (as already noted), a mutual, educational element must be considered. With crime and anti-community behaviours as multi-dimensional social phenomena, community groups and structures cannot simply 'learn' about their 'place' (as part of a community policing policy) from variations in the percentages of recorded crime. Similarly, the PSNI cannot claim to be accountable to communities for delivering a community-oriented service which is at best, based upon partial, a-social knowledge about the issues in a particular area. In striking a balance between police and community definitions of accountability, CGP is about both state and non-state actors defining accountability 'measures' on mutually acceptable terms, not mutually exclusive interests.

Importantly for this educational element, policy around CGP must also be premised upon balancing expectations between police and the community in regard to what they can expect from one another. On the one hand, it is unrealistic for community structures and organisations to expect local PSNI commanders to disregard national or local targets in favour of the local interest of every neighbourhood or area. Indeed, current police manpower and resourcing issues greatly limit the extent to which the delivery of policing can meet all the needs and priorities within locales. On the other hand, PSNI cannot continue to ignore the mandates of local community structures and organisations. In supplying 'first hand' accounts of local policing and security priorities on community terms (Becker, 1963), such understanding can only serve to bolster rather than threaten such seemingly competing drivers of accountability.

Thirdly, when considering specific 'measures' upon which to base accountability for CGP, it is somewhat of a 'holy grail' pursuit to believe that the

infinite pool of approaches, expectations and measures which can be generated through community policing and security governance can be captured in any table or graph (Jeslilow and Parsons, 2000; Fielding and Innes, 2006). This is even before considering or attempting to ‘measure’ the indirect contributions of local, non-state security governance activities to official police figures (Topping, 2008b). At present, and not uniquely to Northern Ireland, there are no universal, recognised measures of community policing that can be applied in the same fashion as recorded crime (Innes, 2005). Thus, to attempt to define such measures would, as summarily noted by an officer during the research, be a ‘fools errand’.

Rather, in moving away from narrow measures of police work and towards broader measures of CGP, *additional* rather than *alternative* measures should be adopted down to the lowest levels of neighbourhood granularity. Attention must be afforded to capturing feelings of community ownership over policing; satisfaction with *local* policing (not currently approved by the NIPB) and with the priority of local targets; and confidence down to the finest neighbourhood levels. Indeed, it is the complete absence of such measures on any local level within the sample areas (or in Northern Ireland) that necessitate their consideration.

Fourthly, in promoting more effective police-community accountability in line with a CGP approach, it is evident that PSNI have failed in one of the basic tenets of community policing – to secure *genuine* long term relationships with communities and key stakeholders in the sample areas (Kelling, 2005). With neighbourhood officers being forced, as a matter of course, to be accountable to their managers for targets as opposed to the communities in which they work because of artificial priorities, the practical delivery of community policing as the basis for CGP must be reconsidered. Indeed, it is a damning indictment of how accountable PSNI are to communities, and how far they need to develop when in 2009, community members within the sample areas of the study *still* turn to local paramilitaries to deal with local anti-community behaviours which the PSNI don’t or won’t recognise because those community issues fall outside the gaze of Orde’s ‘monster’.

Within the transitional and still contested landscape of police-community relations in Northern Ireland, accountability as part of CGP is also about winning the

trust of community and their constituent organisations. With community organisations themselves recognising that accountability is more than simple statistics, CGP is about policing which can tap into the social fabric of community life through community channels – placing the democratic energies and organising of the sample areas at the ‘brain and muscle’ of police work and not just as an extra pair of ‘eyes and ears’ involved in police ‘bean-counting’. And importantly for any policy direction regarding accountability, CGP which combines the elements of community policing and security governance cannot be conceived as an absolute managerial standard denoting ‘failure’ or ‘success’ (Williamson *et al.*, 2006).

Finally, PSNI must endeavour to anchor community policing, and accountability for community policing in the organisations representative of community sentiment and concerns (Acheson *et al.*, 2004). Without PSNI adequately trusting or recognising the community and its organising as integral to broader CGP considerations, accountability will therefore remain a ‘myth’. On its current trajectory, accountability for community policing will continue to be reduced to an exclusive co-operation between a limited sample of the public and the police – defending only the general interests of an ‘aggregated public’ and not the specific policing objectives of locales as a wider public good (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005; Kempa and Shearing, 2002; Wood *et al.*, 2008).

## **6.3 Empowerment and Community Governance Policing**

### **6.3.1 Emerging Issues**

In terms of empowering both police and community actors as part of CGP, a key issue to emerge is the need for a physical, or tangible element to the empowerment process. As part of the mutual sharing of power, decision making and management of policing and crime issues between state and non-state actors (Welsh and Hoshi, 2002), the visible and practical tools to effect this link are of significant importance for CGP. Though as shall be observed, there are a number of issues which may be seen to limit the effectiveness of empowerment ‘tools’ between PSNI and community actors.

Organisationally within PSNI, it is clear that empowerment, as a key tenet of their community policing policy is little more than an aspiration. While they recognise the need for joint ownership, consultation and empowerment of officers to be autonomous within communities (PSNI, 2002a), the tangible outworking of this policy is virtually non-existent. Indeed, there is at best inconsistent autonomy and resources afforded to NPTs to work in conjunction with local communities and community organisations. Thus, with the NPTs as the only ‘face’ to community policing for PSNI, communities essentially have no physical interface with the police through which to share power and decision-making (Friedmann, 1992).

In regard to the minimal efforts at empowerment within PSNI, it is clearly far from a community-anchored process aimed at working with community actors upon issues of common concern; or harnessing the activities of local community capacities in furtherance of a ‘public good’ (Shearing and Wood, 2003a; 2003b). Indeed, with empowerment of community organisations based upon conformity rather than capability (Buerger, 1994), politics and bureaucracy limit the synergy between PSNI and community bodies to all but a select, conformist and politically ‘safe’ minority. And while it may be physically difficult to reconcile PSNI’s bureaucratic culture with the often ‘organic’ nature of community-based security governing, there is a

further lack of real or tangible effort within PSNI to 'see' the potential of empowerment in a long-term, strategic manner.

As part of the vibrant and active community 'body' within East and West Belfast, the community groups and organisations which comprise the areas are essentially 'conduits' between the police and the wider community. On one hand, as social supports to a broad community framework, they help sustain the necessary conditions for social solidarity and limited anti-community behaviour (Nolan *et al.*, 2004). On the other hand, they assume responsibility for community issues, and deal with matters which either the PSNI can not or do not deal with. However, beyond a local, personal appreciation by NPTs, there are distinct limits as to how such community organising is viewed within PSNI more generally – which in turn limits the perceived legitimacy and 'place' of community organisations as part of broader community empowerment process.

With a further inability within PSNI hierarchies to whole-heartedly embrace the positive, *de facto* work undertaken by community organisations around security governance, there is a clear resistance to even indirectly empower such work either by recognising, acknowledging or admitting that such non-state security provision exists (Roche, 2002; Topping, 2008b). With reluctance by PSNI to devolve any power to, or have the courage to engage with such groups (Kempa and Shearing, 2005), it is not surprising that no mechanism exists to document or detail non-state contributions to that of local state policing. And at least from the fieldwork with PSNI, it was generally a sub-text to the responses that to recognise and empower such community groups and organisations rendered questions as to the very legitimacy of the police. It is therefore clear that CGP will always be more complex than the simple distribution of power relations between state and non-state actors around policing matters (Reiner, 2000; Shearing, 1996; Topping, 2008a).

In addition to PSNI failing to acknowledge the legitimacy of non-state security governing as part of empowerment, there has been a failure to appreciate the sense of citizen responsibility and duty within East and West Belfast. As generally recognised within the literature, the aim of empowerment through community policing is to modify citizen relations with the police and promote citizen duty

(Casey, 2008; Joyce, 2006; Kappeler and Kraska, 1998). However, the levels of social solidarity provided through community organising actually requires that the PSNI modify *their* relationship with the community in order to embrace such local qualities and move towards CGP-based empowerment.

At least until such time as the PSNI can conceptually divorce themselves from the centre of policing arrangements; be prepared to accept the on-going and additional policing resources provided through non-state security governance; and be prepared to devolve power and provide the ‘tools’ to such groups as a matter of principle, not politics, empowerment as part of broader CGP ‘thinking’ will remain notional. And by virtue of their authoritative position, it is ultimately the PSNI through their resources and capacities who have the responsibility to empower bodies concerned in policing and security matters, provided those bodies operate within the law and contribute to wider community, rather than narrow police interests (Wood and Marks, 2006).

With CGP about devolving power and responsibility to all legitimate community agents concerned with policing and security matters, as part of Northern Ireland’s post-conflict landscape there are further benefits to be derived from CGP-based empowerment. It may be observed that the politics of the new and inclusive dispensation in the country has provided the key to unlocking the social, political and cultural divisions which necessitated such ‘otherness’ to community-based security provision in the first place. From a community perspective, empowerment is about PSNI taking the first steps along that process to embrace non-state security governing as part of Patten’s broader vision of policing, rather than just a police service in the country (Kempa and Shearing, 2005). With CGP as an unspecified ‘point’ along a general ‘continuum’ of social order (Johnston and Shearing, 2003), empowerment can help to better regulate activities which contribute to that ‘continuum’. Indeed, a CGP empowerment model can further promote social cohesion and connect state and non-state capacities to a wider, more inclusive vision of policing as a public good within an ever more complex security environment (Shearing and Wood, 2003a; Loader, 1999; 2000).



Finally, beyond some of the broader social benefits to empowerment as part of CGP ‘thinking’, it is important to explore emerging issues with regard to the practical value which may be attributed to empowerment where it is undertaken as part of broader *policing* considerations. Firstly, where officers at the neighbourhood level are given autonomy to target key individuals and organisations within communities, it aids in building both respect and recognition between police and the wider community. As a personal (rather than faceless) approach to empowerment, it provides the foundations for a mutually acceptable framework and language in which policing can be discussed (Weatheritt, 1988).

A second and vital aspect of CGP is the need for PSNI embrace key groups as ‘gateways’ to ‘community understanding’, simultaneously allowing police ‘into’ communities while providing a social context to local community issues. With community organisations themselves as the ontological centre of anti-community behaviours, empowerment of key groups is undoubtedly a more effective method of dealing with social issues not strictly within the remit of police work.

Thirdly, it is a clear feature within the sample areas that communities, through their organising capacities, are ‘ready made’ to be empowered in terms of their facilities, resources, interaction and independence from state policing provision (Volker *et al.*, 2007). But crucially for CGP, there are strong tendencies for community mobilization, along with a wealth of innovative and alternative means of dealing with and providing the solutions to anti-community behaviours and policing issues. From social economy projects delivering community safety through to environmental improvement, community bodies actively contribute to the delivery of local security provision. With local, community-centred participation to security governing as a driver for legitimacy to that work, conceptions of empowerment by PSNI must be couched in terms of the ‘soft power’ for policing which can be wielded through CGP approaches (Vaughan, 2007).

In overview of the emerging issues of empowerment and CGP, it is clear that PSNI have failed to embrace non-state security governance capacities as part of broader *policing* considerations (Kempa and Shearing, 2005; Topping, 2008a). On one hand, this has been generated by the sheer differences between PSNI and

community-based conceptions of empowerment's broader value and where it could or should interface as part of a wider public good. But on the other hand, there are physical barriers within the police to working with (alleged) former combatants who were involved in the conflict. Indeed, for many officers across all ranks, this is an issue which will take time to come to terms, and be comfortable with. Thus, CGP can in effect, re-calibrate the 'balance' between police and community-based policing provision which has become skewed in the void between the over-simplistic legitimacy/illegitimacy discourse which has dominated the rationale behind the failure to empower non-state actors (Loader, 1999; Topping, 2008a). However, empowerment will require both PSNI and communities to negotiate power and governance direction around policing with those whom they may not trust or respect in view of their opposing and parallel roles during the conflict. However, it is the 'end game' of a broader, inclusive *policing* service which maximises the use of all available policing resources in the sample areas upon which such difficult steps need to be based.

### 6.3.2 Policy Directions

When considering policy directions for CGP, a key starting position must begin with PSNI. While they recognise a general need to include the community in solutions to local problems, quite *how* such inclusion should be approached has never been fully defined (PSNI, 2002a). It must be remembered that the PSNI retain a unique position at the centre of ‘power’ within an uneven and complex ‘patchwork’ of security provision within late modernity (Garland, 1996; Shearing, 1996). However, PSNI have failed to use their strategic position to consider the possibilities for the empowerment and inclusion of community-based capacities beyond the narrow remit of organisational imperatives.

Empowerment as part of PSNI’s Policing with the Community policy has in fact been a unilateral process – based upon minimal, police-centric conceptions of community involvement rather than maximal, community-anchored notions of policing. As indicative of the short-term rather than strategic attitudes within PSNI, empowerment of officers to work effectively with communities and community structures has been a luxury rather than a necessity in the delivery of community policing. In this regard, PSNI must recognise that empowerment, as a ‘tool’ for generating synergy between the police and the community is not a ‘relative device’ to be used in procedurally ‘thin’ compromise with community bodies (Black, 2000; He *et al.*, 2002). Rather, CGP is about the ‘absolute’ application of empowerment on a strategic and operational basis within PSNI and at the community level to mobilise latent community capacities which contribute not just to PSNI performance, but engender wider community participation in policing.

Beyond PSNI’s institutional inertia, in policy terms it is important to consider steps which may be taken to improve the nexus between, and synergy of, working between police and community levels. As readily argued in the security governance literature, within the ‘unpredictable void’ between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ order, there is no ‘map’ of non-state security provision which can be used to differentiate or detail that which contributes to policing and security matters (Ayling and Grabosky, 2006; Crawford, 2006). As part of the vibrant and active civil society within the sample areas (and Northern Ireland more generally), beyond the scope of this research there

have never been any attempts, either by PSNI or otherwise, to ‘map’ non-state security governance as that which contributes (directly and indirectly) to Northern Ireland’s traditionally lower crime rates (Topping, 2008b). In a practical sense, empowerment of the ‘unknown’ cannot therefore be the foundations for effective police-community interaction. But as the findings would suggest, the current dearth of ‘mapped’ security governance activity does not preclude the use of knowledge which *does* exist – namely at the NPT level as PSNI’s physical ‘agents’ within communities.

Arguably, for CGP and empowerment, local neighbourhood officers are the most valuable assets to the police and to communities. As the ‘coalface’ of police interface with communities, they perform an important function as mediators between the state and non-state security objectives; while balancing these dual mandates within local contextual and discretionary factors necessary in the delivery of policing and maintaining order. In this regard, neighbourhood officers need to be used as a vital tool for PSNI through which to ‘see’ community cohesion and co-ordination as vital to the empowerment process (Nolan *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, neighbourhood officers are the key organisational link for PSNI to communities in terms of their knowledge. With police officers more generally only trained to ‘see’ communities in terms of criminal definitions and not social factors, emphasis on local contexts and neighbourhood officer knowledge is vital if more encompassing visions of empowerment are to be developed. Importantly, neighbourhood officers are the PSNI’s ‘eyes’ through which empowerment can be tailored at the local level. However, major shifts in PSNI policy are required. This is especially so when less resources are allocated to such work than anything else in the organisation.

From an objective viewpoint, a systematic mechanism needs to be adopted by PSNI which, in co-operation non-state actors involved in security governance, at least identifies skills and capacities on a local basis within the sample areas. An iterative process which considers viable interaction and interface between state and non-state policing capacities must be the premise for empowerment. Because regardless of PSNI attitudes or perceptions, to ignore or exclude what are objectively

useful and additional policing resources (see *Appendix A*), is to artificially retain the state provision for policing at the centre of complex and plural demands for security (Dupont *et al.*, 2003; Shearing, 2001c).

At this point, it is interesting to note Bayley and Shearing's (2001) comparison of state and private policing provision. They contend that the rapid expansion of private/commercial non-state security provision has been successful because of Hayekian market principles – or in other words, that with the police (and state) as relatively inefficient and distant in comparison from the market, they cannot take advantage of local knowledge, understanding and expertise. However, PSNI resolutely refuse to apply such 'commercial' logic to community auspices and providers of policing. Thus, in terms of the effective and efficient delivery of community policing, considerations based upon the objective benefits of the non-state policing 'economy' provide a compelling case for empowerment of community bodies (as a matter of policy) to be taken more seriously.

Though as evident, for CGP to work both PSNI and community actors must be more open and genuine in terms of the 'window' of understanding they provide into each other's complex worlds. For the PSNI, this will undoubtedly be more difficult than 'opening their doors' and embracing those who believe they have a stake in policing provision. So too at the community level, actors must also recognise that that empowerment on policing issues does not begin and end with the PSNI, as but one body in a complex criminal justice system. As uncovered within the research, restrictive attitudes to empowering community auspices of policing run much wider than PSNI, extending to the Northern Ireland Office, Youth Justice Agency and Belfast City Council as organisations with a position on the 'official' policing map.

Looking more specifically at the community level, in moving towards a CGP approach, providing a 'window' of understanding to PSNI is both ideologically and physically problematic. Within the new political dispensation, community bodies in both sample areas must demonstrate more fully their willingness to eschew the principles of 'separation' from the state – which very often defined their non-state policing provision during the conflict. Community bodies must also attempt to

define their often piecemeal, *ad hoc* and seemingly loosely co-ordinated corpus of work more rigidly than at present. Regardless of the intentions of community-based security provision, they must recognise that PSNI cannot understand (and therefore empower) that which cannot be grasped more fully within police language and measures. From an objective viewpoint, CGP must be considered as a co-operative effort in defining: the position of PSNI and community provision of policing in terms of who is better 'placed' to deal with particular problems within specific contexts; and the parameters and limits of each others work in relation to specific issues. Thus, more attention should be paid as to how far community structures and organising can be 'pushed' and utilised in terms of policing provision rather than how little PSNI can 'get away' with using.

Though as part of the ever declining PSNI resources, along with reduced paramilitary policing, more effective police-community empowerment is more urgently required than ever. With neither the PSNI nor community bodies able to 'police the peace' effectively on their own – either practically, ideologically or politically – a small, but limited window of opportunity does exist for a CGP approach to 'take hold' and for police and community capacities to be combined into an unified body of 'work' to arrest crime and anti-community behaviours. Though in terms of the broader policy considerations and emerging issues, how quickly issues of empowerment can be properly and genuinely addressed will continue to limit the potential use of CGP as a viable, co-operative policing 'good'.

## 6.4 Problem Solving and Community Governance Policing

### 6.4.1 Emerging Issues

As a natural extension of partnership working, problem solving as part of CGP ‘thinking’ is about developing and utilising the physical and relational capacities of state and non-state partners to deal with mutually defined problems. Indeed, effective problem solving requires creative and local knowledge which can be combined into a decentralised approach to deal with policing and security matters (McLaughlin, 2007). Thus, through examining the emerging issues for problem solving, the analysis will explore the intersection of PSNI and community-based problem solving capacities, while defining potential collaboration as part of policy directions for CGP.

One of the basic ‘building blocks’ to problem solving as part of CGP is the need for policing problems to be defined not merely in their physical sense, but as part of a more fluid process through which problems are identified, understood and managed. At the NPT level, it is recognised that problem solving can only be effective where police work as part of that fluid process – working with the grain of community norms and standards through which problems become apparent.

Firstly, in adopting ‘natural’ rather than ‘positivistic’ approaches to problem solving, informal and discretionary approaches are required to signal to communities a genuine police willingness to co-operate on *their* terms, rather than merely PSNI enforcing the law on the state’s behalf (Friedmann, 1992). Secondly, where there are genuine feelings of co-operation between police officers and communities, such ‘closeness’ can enhance the understanding between police and community bodies as to their responsibilities regarding certain issues. And thirdly, where problem solving is based upon a genuine working nexus, normative *obligations* for action are also generated between police and community actors – with expectations of ‘payback’; access to ‘key people’; and additional knowledge transfer as part of the problem solving process.

On one hand, this nexus allows both officers and community actors to access each other's underlying ideologies and rationales, providing a common platform upon which to base problem solving as part of a *collective* process (Coleman, 1994). On the other hand, through actively pursuing this nexus approach, it reduces the 'transactional costs' between officers and community actors in terms of supplying the necessary capacities and resources required to solve particular problems (Morrow, 2006; Greene and Taylor, 1998).

In terms of CGP, broader *community*-level properties are also significant for community self-direction and organising as part of problem solving processes (Marks and Goldsmith, 2006). On a simple level, community infrastructure, as 'social traits' of the sample areas are viewed as vital by officers and community organisations in maintaining relatively low levels of crime and solving anti-community problems (Brewer, 2001; Topping, 2008b). With the numerous community actors and bodies involved in security governing further providing homogeneity to community values around crime and policing, they provide a physical mechanism for problem solving processes through their organising, association, articulation and triangulation of community norms.

In terms of helping to define problems, it is also notable that community organisations (within the homogeneous networks) act as mediators between PSNI and the wider communities of the sample areas. As sources of knowledge in regard to local problems and issues, they also aid in the process of 'tailoring' broad policing activity. With Skogan (2006b) arguing that problem solving is the mechanism through which police transform abstract community policing concepts into everyday 'work', community organisations provide a more targeted, contextual layer to general problem solving imperatives (Weatheritt, 1988). Furthermore, in parallel with the ability of neighbourhood officers' abilities to turn low-level crime intelligence into high-level criminal intelligence (Brodeur, 1983; O'Reilly and Ellison, 2006), community bodies possess an ability to transform low-level community information (regarding anti-community behaviours) into high-level socially co-ordinated solutions. Thus, it is those community bodies involved in security governing who bring to the problem solving process knowledge of: who is



best placed to deal with a problem; how it should be dealt with; and what is in the best interests of the community in terms of a suitable and sustainable resolution.

Finally, in terms of defining problems as part of CGP, it is the ‘closed’ nature to community organising (albeit along sectarian lines within the sample areas) which provides the necessary framework through which problem solving capacities can be mobilised and potential actions framed (Wells *et al.*, 2006). With East and West Belfast as relatively strong and homogeneous communities, far from lacking vibrancy and vitality (as argued in the literature regarding ‘closed’ communities), the numerous community organisations involved in security governance are testament to the open configurations of community organising; and the ability of such organising to sustain a diverse range of roles, mentalities and capacities around the governance of security (Coleman, 1994; Fukuyama, 1999). Thus, as part of CGP approaches to defining and understanding community issues, PSNI cannot afford to ‘ignore’ community-based problem solving capacities – especially where community capacities hold the key to solving complex social problems which beyond the rhetoric of ‘community’ in community policing, the PSNI know little about.

Philosophically and physically, problem solving as part of PSNI’s community policing rhetoric has never ‘gotten off the ground’. With senior officers admitting that problem solving approaches have never been oriented to *resolving* problems, but merely *responding* to them, resources have not been made available to invest in labour intensive, relational problem solving processes (as noted above). This may be viewed as indicative of a mindset within PSNI which conceives problem solving not as a process or relation with communities – but a product, composed of physical and measurable definitions. Or in other words, the marginalisation of community organisations and their problem solving capacities insofar as they can be defined in terms of their police-centric, criminogenic qualities (Crawford, 1995).

Furthermore, with targets as the measure of ‘success’ with regard to PSNI’s ability to ‘solve’ community problems, this is corrosive for any conceptions of CGP. On one hand, targeted problem solving is essentially an ‘easy’ method by which PSNI management can circumvent the necessary genuine (and resource intensive) commitment to engaging with community structures involved in security provision.

Though on the other hand, as part of a non-ideological (non-community policing), cost effective and ‘what works’ approach to problem solving, the research indicates that targets have further skewed problem solving processes by artificially ‘forcing’ officers to work towards management priorities – a tactic which ‘solves’ problems in the interests of everyone *but* the community (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2001). Thus, in what may be viewed as a regression by PSNI to *hierarchical* target chasing and priority setting (antithetical to community policing – Willis *et al.*, 2007), such an approach further raises questions with regard to the fundamental ‘place’ of the community and community capacities as part of PSNI’s vision of community policing and problem solving.

In considering CGP approaches, the current PSNI fixation with future-oriented targets has evidently stripped problem solving of its community context and frame (Zedner, 2006; De Lint and Virta, 2004). Through failing to increase autonomy and authority down the ranks, managerial ambivalence towards ‘trusting’ local officers and communities has displaced the intangible, relational benefits of problem solving with the certainty of community problems as an imagined ‘object’. In this regard, the isolated nature of PSNI’s problem solving capacities cannot claim to be cognisant of the community-constructed definitions, consensus and priorities around community problems.

Finally, it is a notable feature of community-based security governance that it is not premised upon dealing with, or solving anti-community behaviours in a short-term criminal or legal sense. Rather, community-based problem solving capacities are about long-term, strategic organising at the community level – to enhance the communal, social traits characteristic of non-state security provision and problem solving within the sample areas. However, it appears that such long-term community strategies, as attempts at strengthening collective efficacy and social capital, are currently incompatible with the PSNI’s short-term objectives of merely reducing crime statistics as a problem solving strategy (Morrow, 2006; Sampson *et al.*, 1997).

It is clear that PSNI need to be prepared to re-negotiate their relationship with community-based problem solving capacities (as an ontological source of solutions). Under their current problem solving orientation, PSNI have clearly failed to engage

with, or derive benefit from, the potential for broader CGP problem solving approaches. With an inability to conceive problem solving in any other terms except their own, PSNI's superior resources and technologies will continue to remain detached from the community as a problem solving partner – retaining their belief that community problems are abstract conceptions of complex social phenomena to which they hold the solutions (Herbert, 2001).

### 6.4.2 Policy Directions

Exploring policy directions for problem solving, there are a number of issues which must be addressed in terms of combining police and community capacities as part of a CGP approach. With problem solving bound up in myriad configurations of co-operation, priorities and definitions as to the nature of (community) problems to be solved, it is *how* PSNI and community organising can more effectively interface which shall now be addressed.

From a PSNI perspective, they need to ‘re-think’ their approach to problem solving; how they ‘see’ community problems; and the priority they attach to community capacities around security governance. Apart from the narrow section of neighbourhood officers engaging with community structures to deal with anti-community behaviours, PSNI is an organisation governed by policy which distances itself from the ontology of policing problems within the sample areas. With a general consensus among the PSNI ranks that problem solving has become a targeted, statistical entity rather than an iterative, relational and community anchored process, it is indicative of the quantitative, a-contextual basis to PSNI problem solving policy (Brogden, 2006).

Indeed, PSNI have eschewed the Peelian principles underpinning problem solving and ‘shown two fingers’ to the NPTs engaged in iterative problem solving in conjunction with community actors. With community problems essentially managed and defined in an undemocratic fashion due to PSNI setting the ‘official’ parameters to the ‘debate’, there is currently no common language through which CGP approaches can be pursued or considered (Crawford, 1995). In part, PSNI’s problem solving language, as bound up in ‘bean counting’ pressures, must become more receptive to, or provide alternative mechanisms for, understanding community issues as arrived at through security governance activism. But so too community actors and bodies must consider ways in which to ‘sell’ their capacities and educate PSNI, both operationally and strategically, as to the value of their approaches to problem solving.

As a further policy consideration, community organisations within the sample areas clearly recognise the changing nature of society and a movement towards

reduced levels of community organising in the post-conflict era. In this regard, rosy assumptions cannot be made with regard to non-state security capacities (Topping, 2008b). But where there is greater interaction between PSNI and community structures, it may lay the foundations for more proactive conditions which can arrest degenerative issues which affect community organising (Sampson *et al.*, 1999). Where greater support (and recognition) is given to non-state capacities, it will not only support generic community participation in policing matters, but enhance mutual trust and solidarity between police *and* community bodies – as an essential building block to wider social control and cohesion within communities (Rose and Clear, 1998).

In terms of the more substantive policy issue of securing community-based capacities as part of local problem solving ‘assets’, community ‘innovation’ around problem solving capacities has not diminished within the post-conflict space. With both neighbourhood officers and communities recognising a shift in the orientation of non-state problem solving capacities towards dealing with ‘everyday crime’ (and not conflict-related issues), as part of CGP it is vital that ‘space’ is given to such capacities within PSNI’s community policing policy – as a quality in itself; and as an indicator of community willingness to be complicit in its own security governance direction. Through adopting such an approach, PSNI can then begin to understand that community rationales and organising around criminogenic issues do not just ‘arise’ from generic sets of local circumstances, but are in fact actively constructed by community members (Gilchrist, 2004). From this perspective, the parameters for community organising and problem solving around anti-community behaviours may be more fully understood as a specific *social* construction and not a PSNI abstraction based on problems that can be simply measured.

Another distinct policy consideration bound up in the social construction approach to policing and security issues is the ‘embeddedness’ of community organising and capacities into the social fabric of the sample areas. It may be observed that PSNI’s problem solving approaches merely deal with, and measure the consequences of complex social conditions which can result in crime and anti-community behaviours. However, it is the social ‘reach’ provided through security

governance organising which can provide the context to such conditions. With many of the community organisations addressing criminogenic issues within housing, social, economic and environmental contexts, it is this approach to security governance which can more fully inform problem solving initiatives by PSNI. With the literature indicating that problem solving more generally is shifting towards a ‘reassurance’ style of policing, there is at least some latitude within the police vocabulary to understand some of the more subtle and complex issues as to the social construction of community problems (Innes, 2004b; Maguire and John, 2006).

As part of CGP thinking, local security governance as that which supplies the focus for, and solutions to, anti-community behaviours should not be considered simply in terms of how it can be related to PSNI problem solving capacities. Rather, it should be considered as a social phenomenon in itself; as a unique ‘calibrating’ tool against which PSNI can judge the ‘depth’ of their working at the community level; and their effectiveness in dealing with complex social problems as defined and understood by organised community structures, not aggregated and simplified community voices.

Another facet to the problem solving capacities within the sample areas is the notion of ‘responsibilisation’. Without the coercive ‘tools’ enjoyed by the state through which to enforce legal and social norms, it was the ability of non-state organisations to use moral, rational and pragmatic approaches to problem solving which is of policy significance (Matsueda, 2006). More specifically, through key organisations and individuals in security governance networks, a high degree of community ‘responsibility’ around crime and anti-community behaviour is instilled – encouraging local populations to proactively deal with such issues through taking ownership of the area in which they live. In this regard, there is an inherent ‘pro-activity’ to community-based problem solving capacities. At the macro-level, it is this ‘collective responsibility’, as a defence against the transgression of community norms which acts as a barrier to, and supplies the focus for, organising around anti-community behaviours. And at the micro-level, it is the pro-active links of the key actors and organisations into the social layers of the community which further deter potential anti-community behaviours.

With community structures and organising ‘commanding’ community consensus, rationales and capacities around security governance issues, PSNI merely ‘do’ their version of problem solving within the sample areas rather than as part of that which exists. Thus, consideration for policy must be given as to how, and under what conditions, the PSNI can tap into and work with the legitimate and commanding ‘responsibilisation’ strategies effected through non-state organising. With a general separation between state and non-state problem solving capacities, PSNI will continue to remain a *technically* astute, yet socially naïve ‘extra’ on the periphery of a complex, irreductable body of security governance activity within the sample areas.

## **6.5 Partnership and Community Governance Policing**

### **6.5.1 Emerging Issues**

As a notable feature of the literature, partnership is a relatively simple term denoting the interaction between police and partners around policing and security matters (PSNI, 2002a). However, the purpose of analysing partnership through the CGP lens is to highlight the complexity of partnership in regard to policing provision between state and non-state actors. Furthermore, this section will explore such complexity in terms of emerging issues and policy directions surrounding the management and deployment of PSNI and community-based capacities as part of a CGP partnership approach.

It is a clear belief, if not policing ‘fact’ at the NPT level, that effective partnership working between the police and the community begins with the lowest possible level of working – namely, at the individual, personal level of interaction between officers and community bodies/individuals. As a testament to the success of the flexible partnership approaches adopted by neighbourhood officers, such working practices have the ability to ameliorate the ingrained political and hitherto unfathomed separation with Republican community organisations involved in local security governance. However, with such genuine, local partnership working between PSNI and community bodies ‘beginning and ending’ with the NPTs, there continues to be a tangible and robust sense of distinction between community organisations and the PSNI. In spite of NPT beliefs that partnership working is a long-term, iterative process, this is currently lost within PSNI’s managerial attitudes to partnership working as a ‘tick-box’ entity. With partnership working judged exclusively in terms of such ‘box-tick’ benefits for the police, this position eschews the egalitarian *community* benefits of inclusion in policing matters.

Furthermore, with significant levels of bureaucracy, formality and complexity accompanying managerial attitudes to partnership, PSNI conceptions of partnership are currently based upon tokenism rather than genuine community participation.



Indeed, police-community partnerships above the NPT level generally tend towards the acclamation of decisions already made rather than collaborative, negotiated engagement with community bodies with a stake in policing matters (Ryan, 2007).

Of most significance to broader CGP ‘thinking’ about partnership working is the fact that where such artificial and one dimensional police-centric approaches to partnership are pursued, it fails to appreciate or utilise community-based forms of networked partnership upon which communication and co-ordination around security governing is sustained. Indeed, CGP partnership working cannot be embedded where police partnership ‘rules’ over-ride the relational influences of networks in policing matters (Wood and Marks, 2006; Milward and Provan, 2000).

With CGP further inhibited through PSNI’s ‘silo’ rather than synergist attitudes to partnership working, there is an implicit failure to understand the practical benefits provided by community-based networked partnership approaches as an ‘antidote’ to PSNI bureaucracy and rules. Firstly, with networked approaches to security governing providing a strategic and relational awareness within and between community organisations, there is a propensity for collective and agreed decision making between community partners. Contradicting Dupont’s (2006a) contention that partners (or nodes) tend to compete within networks, there are ‘natural hierarchies’ and ‘lead’ community nodes, providing the necessary levels of coherence, organising and authority to their networked partnership approach, as demanded by Johnston and Shearing (2003).

Secondly, such nodal networked configurations provide a physical, social and cultural density to community organising around security governing. Providing a *social stability* to co-ordinated partnership working, this moves beyond Dupont’s (2006b) notion of network density as merely numerical definition. Though importantly for the emerging issues around partnerships as part of CGP, with the PSNI’s inability to conceive (at the managerial level) partnerships as anything other than mechanical meetings with collections of individuals, they have failed to effectively tap into the available community networks as a means of enhancing their ability to police *in partnership* with the community according to community conceptions of the term. On one hand, it is understandable that there is reluctance

within PSNI to engage in partnership (and share decision making) with the amorphous, fluid and indeterminate networks of community structures (Loader, 2000). Though on the other hand, such PSNI ‘thinking’ fails to acknowledge the *de facto* democratic, self-reflective and self-critical qualities provided through networked community-configurations within the sample areas. Though beyond what may be conceived as the more physical aspects to partnerships, it is important to explore the emerging issues with regard to the more subtle, social dynamics underpinning the (lack of) partnership interaction with communities by the PSNI.

With partnership expectations between the police and community auspices firmly tipped in favour of the PSNI, there is no support for community organising and infrastructure by the police as part of their community policing approach (Friedmann, 1994); no willingness to consider the community ‘voice’, as articulated through the organised community networks; and no affinity with, or ability to influence the local community networks in regard to policing issues (Bradley, 1998). Thus, with a PSNI reluctance to pursue socially-embedded partnership avenues, there is a failure to genuinely embrace even the bare minima of partnership approaches as might be expected as part of their community policing partnership rhetoric.

Furthermore, in considering CGP partnership thinking, PSNI have failed to capitalise upon combined police and community partnership qualities as a matter of good governance *and* to deepen the democratic principles of community policing and security governance (Shearing, 2003; 2006a). Firstly, it may be observed that the amorphous, fluid nature of networks involved in security governing is neither spatially or temporally ‘fixed’. However, it is this quality which provides networks with a unique ability to ‘seep’ into, and interact with, all aspects of community life within the sample areas, while providing the answer to partnership arrangements beyond rigid PSNI conceptions. And with networks as a function of ‘shifting alliances’ rather than ‘steering and rowing’, such ‘networked community alliances’ have the ability to act as rich natural sources of community information and understanding – themselves constituting a culture around the governance of security (Shearing, 2003; Osborne and Gaebeler, 1994; Castells, 2000).

Secondly, in order to promote a greater awareness of the advantages to networked partnership working, the corpus of community organisations be proactive in evidencing the organisational and democratic capacities of the networks through which they operate. Indeed, the nodal networked organisation to security governance is characterised by ‘lead nodes’ who themselves provide the gravitas for natural hierarchies within the networks to form. Furthermore, such lead nodes help to streamline the capacities, resources, rationales and technologies of ‘weaker’ nodes into a coherent format as part of the wider ‘community picture’ around common policing and security issues (Jones, 2007). In this regard, networks organised around security governing may be seen to possess an intrinsic value insofar as their organisational capabilities generate a larger ‘policing resource’ than the sum of the individual nodal capacities (Gilchrist, 2004). However, beyond the local neighbourhood level, there are few efforts in terms of community organisations ‘selling’ their capabilities in a more accessible, police-centric language in order to promote the potential for CGP.

Finally, it is clear for the emerging issues of partnership and CGP that PSNI’s myopia in regard to engaging in the nodal networks of the sample areas has limited the synergy with the community bodies bound together and co-ordinated around policing and anti-community issues. In this respect, there have been no attempts to consider any ‘new’ CGP platform upon which to interpret and bridge the gap between police-centric and networked visions of partnerships working (Dupont, 2004). Until PSNI can release their ‘command and control’ grip upon partnerships (Loader, 2006), a separatist form of working will continue to trump their subservient rhetoric under their banner of community policing.

### 6.5.2 Policy Directions

When considering policy directions for CGP approaches to partnership, in order to maximize the synergy between PSNI and community-based resources and capacities, a pragmatic approach needs to be adopted. With PSNI as the central auspice of policing and security provision, it is they who hold the ultimate responsibility (and wield the power) to promote more effective partnership approaches with those non-state bodies involved in security governance. With PSNI certain to retain their policing monopoly, any perceived ‘threats’ to this status by virtue of including physically and technically inferior community bodies in their partnership approaches is both ideologically and practically flawed (Jones, 2007). Thus, it is to the pragmatic and practical out-workings of CGP and partnerships upon which policy directions shall be considered.

Under the current bureaucratic and formal partnership regime, PSNI has undoubtedly failed to appreciate the potential of working partnership with community capacities as part of CGP. However, it is to some of the more transformative policy considerations to which attention shall now turn. And as part of a re-education of PSNI’s partnership practices, consideration must be given not to how much they necessarily ‘do’, but how much PSNI should allow non-state partners to ‘do’ and under what circumstances (Shearing, 2006a; Topping, 2008b).

Firstly, in what may be viewed as the necessary collaborative basis between state and non-state auspices of security (Wood and Marks, 2006), it is vital for *all* possible opportunities of engagement between police and community actors to be exploited. Beyond PSNI management’s heavy reliance upon infrequent, formalistic and a-social ‘meetings’, it is the regular, informal, social interactions which are of most value to community bodies. Rather than judging the success or otherwise of a partnership as a ‘tick-box’ approach to the number of participants or the rank of officers present, it is the perceived prioritization of genuine community participation which is vital for CGP (Ryan, 2007).

At least at the NPT level, this approach is undoubtedly valued in terms of developing legitimacy and co-operation with non-state actors while providing an accountable link between PSNI and nodes at the community level (Sunshine and

Tyler, 2003; Herbert, 2005). On one hand, this NPT partnership ‘link’ is the only point of contact between the bureaucratic PSNI hierarchy and the complex nodal configurations of community organising within the sample areas. Though on the other hand, there is a failure, as part of the ‘box-tick’ partnership regime, to ‘see’ the implications for utilising local opportunities for partnership working, or indeed the wider implication for community perceptions of PSNI as a viable partner to the community. Thus, in moving towards a CGP partnership approach, PSNI must prioritise such local partnership interactions and opportunities; and develop indicators of success for local partnership working beyond claims at success based simply upon bringing groups together round a table.

Secondly, it is vital that the *de facto* benefits brought to partnerships by community organisations are given more consideration by PSNI. With nodal networks providing a structured, coherent basis through which resources and capacities can be mobilised (Burris *et al.*, 2005), it is this community dynamic which sets *policing* in the context of criminogenic issues as the communities in the sample areas see them. With such nodal networked configurations further facilitating security governance activity between nodes and within the *specific* social contexts of the sample areas, their collective ‘swarm’ may be seen to channel such knowledge in a coherent manner – a quality which can only be complimentary to PSNI as an isolated node of *general* action and order (Ensler and Xuejuan, 2007; Kempa *et al.*, 1999).

Thirdly, in terms of considering the interface between PSNI and community conceptions of partnership working, it is important (as noted) not to develop overly ‘cosy’ conceptions of community organising and capacities in regard to security governing (Jones, 2007; Topping, 2008b). However, the sample areas would appear to be somewhat of a unique case. With those areas pre-disposed to cohesion (especially around policing and anti-community behaviours), policy around CGP should be concerned with PSNI actively supporting and strengthening the cohesive networked dynamics that already exist (Kerely and Benson, 2000; Casey, 2008). With cultural and social ‘density’ as a key feature to nodal networked partnership approaches (as noted above), through supporting and encouraging such organising,

PSNI can bolster CGP approaches which work: across cultural boundaries; between social strata; and begin to appreciate the conditions under which pro-active rather than passive partnership co-operation may be developed (Crawford, 1995; Loader, 2006).

Beyond policy directions with regard to the utilisation of PSNI and community capacities, it is also important to consider policy in terms of the wider 'outreach' potential within the sample areas. It is a logical assumption in that the police cannot be in partnership with all available partners at all times; and nor can partnerships accede to all the demands and expectations (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005). However, it is both a narrow and flawed conception of partnership working to consider the development of state and non-state synergy around policing in such simplistic 'supply and demand' terms.

An integral feature of partnership and CGP policy must be foundations based upon *meaningful* interaction and not *mechanical* obligation between partners. With a clear willingness from non-state actors to engage meaningfully with PSNI, not only must this be 'matched' by PSNI, but further supported through leadership and resources. In line with the current (and developing) political progress in Northern Ireland, building partnerships between police and community organisations in 'hard-to-reach' areas (especially Republican) must be oriented towards a 'pushing on doors' policy – or in other words, both police and non-state actors adopting methods of working and engagement which shed new light upon one another's attitudes, practices and willingness to work together (Crawford, 1995). Indeed, efforts at unshackling police-community partnerships from their close association with inter-communal relations must also be a key feature of broader, CGP approaches to partnership (Walker, 2001; Topping, 2008a).

As part of the unique context to the sample areas, another issue for policy direction is that of the continuing presence of, and *rises* in, paramilitary 'policing'. On one hand, there have been 'official' cessations in overt paramilitary policing as a powerful (and in many cases primary) means of promoting social order and controlling low-level anti-community behaviour and criminality (Monaghan, 2008; Topping, 2008b). Though on the other hand, it is the 'space' between the reduced

paramilitary ‘otherness’ to security provision and the expectation from communities of being able to work in partnership with PSNI which has yet to be filled. Thus, with community-based security governance, in isolation, unable to deal with criminality, it is they who are indicating that *no one* is now dealing with anti-community behaviours. Furthermore, this has supplied a mandate for those who can enforce swift and visible ‘justice’ within the sample areas, further de-legitimising PSNI authority and reducing community desires to work with such an unresponsive and unwilling partner. In terms of CGP policy, there needs to be more police flexibility and resources made available to engaging with community partners. Indeed, it is the PSNI’s stubborn belief that they are the only body capable or authorised to direct other partners on their terms which prevents them from ‘seeing’ out to the periphery of communities – precisely where security governance can be most effective and where paramilitarism remains (Topping, 2008b; Kempa *et al.*, 1999).

Furthermore, in terms of PSNI reaching out to communities through partnerships, policy direction for CGP must be cognisant of the ‘domino effect’, characteristic of nodal networked configurations within the sample areas. Through PSNI engaging with lead nodes; and those lead nodes being encouraged to act as conduits for new partnership relations, the symbolic engagement may be developed into a broader, physical interaction between PSNI and non-state actors. With nodal networks defined by the subjective relational spheres, it is this ‘soft power’ which is key to the ‘domino effect’ (Dupont, 2006b; Vaughan, 2007). Indeed, information, concepts and objectives around policing and security issues can be translated and transmitted on community terms across and within the local networks. And in policy terms, such a partnership approach can therefore generate widespread community co-operation – not because that co-operation is based upon a dictated order, but because the networked configuration provides community direction while allowing individual nodes the freedom to negotiate how best they can contribute to wider policing/community objectives on their own terms.

Finally, as part of CGP approaches to partnership working, it is a vital for policy direction that PSNI ‘trust’ the body of non-state networks and their contributions to policing and security matters. With the myriad permutations and

calculations of nodal networked partnership relationships, it is this characteristic of the sample areas which is best managed by community actors and under community conditions. Thus, where such configurations are embraced by PSNI, it the non-state policing resources and capacities which set the parameters of partnership outside police-centric language – which in turn can provide the necessary *emphasis* on the community level as part of more holistic CGP conceptions partnerships around policing and anti-community issues.



## 6.6 Service Delivery and Community Governance Policing

### 6.6.1 Emerging Issues

The final area in regard to the CGP concept is that of service delivery. This section will explore the emerging issues of state and non-state policing service, while positing suggestions for the delivery of a CGP service as part of policy directions. Furthermore, this section will evidence the difficulties and peculiarities for the CGP concept in terms of the interaction and interface between competing state and non-state policing services as a unique feature of the post-conflict landscape in Northern Ireland.

One of the key issues to emerge in regard to service delivery and CGP is that of the distinction between PSNI and communities in terms of: the concept of what a policing service should ‘look’ like; and the perceived necessity of combining both state and non-state capacities as part of a more unified policing service. In regard to the former, it is a critical feature of the findings that the *context* to the service that needs to be delivered by PSNI is factored in community policing considerations. Looking to Skogan’s (2006a) ‘asymmetrical encounters’ thesis, it make suggestions as to the impact of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ encounters between the police and the public. However, within the context Northern Ireland, the thesis is limited in one key aspect – namely, consideration of the ingrained collective community experiences which prejudice the policing service required *before* it has been delivered.

It must be noted that community policing as delivered by PSNI does not start from a ‘neutral’ position from which be deemed ‘good’ or ‘bad’. It is felt by community bodies that the service delivered by PSNI is about ameliorating the ‘negative’ community experiences of policing during the conflict; *and* PSNI demonstrating to communities that they were committed to delivering a community oriented service in conjunction with pre-existing auspices of accepted and alternative security provision as a symbol of accepting the wider community. At least within the NPT levels, it is recognised that such efforts must be focused at the individual community organisation level. Firstly, to ‘prove’ to community organisations (as

conduits for community consensus and organising), that proactive efforts are being made to provide a community-centred service – a message which in turn will filter through local community networks (Cheurprakobkit and Bastsch, 2001).

Secondly, from a community perspective, such focused working is required to break the ‘negative consent’ paradigm which serves to legitimate the ‘separateness’ of the policing service provided by non-state bodies. Through officers demonstrating to communities that they are prepared to both listen and co-operate with such auspices of policing provision, it is seen to provide an opportunity for community capacities, rationales and relations to be strengthened and developed as part of a broader CGP service. However, it is beyond the level of local neighbourhood officers that PSNI’s limited organisation vision of delivering a community policing service is clear.

Fundamental to the limited interaction between the delivery of community policing by PSNI and that of non-state bodies, was management direction and leadership. With the majority of PSNI respondents contending that post-Patten organisational support for the delivery of community policing was virtually non-existent, it is consistent with the literature insofar police organisations (and especially those with a militaristic history) are generally sceptical as the delivery of community-oriented programmes (Skogan, 2006b; Brogden, 2005).

Firstly, with active resistance within PSNI management levels to engage with those organisations involved in security governance, it was indicative of their inability to ‘see’ how policing could or should be delivered on any other terms except their own (McEvoy *et al.*, 2002; Gormally, 2004; Topping, 2008b). With a distinctly ‘top-down’, directed approach to the delivery of community policing, it is antithetical to the ‘bottom-up’, discretionary approach required to engage with communities and community organisations on even the most basic, mutually acceptable terms. Secondly, as part of this managerial ‘straight-jacketing’ of community policing, service delivery has become characterised by a singular, managerial and statistical ‘standard’ to be applied across the sample areas (Brooke, 2006). Not only does this ignore the contributions of non-state actors to the *overall* delivery of policing and security in East and West Belfast, but subsumes those

contributions under PSNI's aggregating *statistical*, rather than *consent-based* service delivery paradigm.

Of vital importance to CGP and the delivery of a policing service which combines both state and non-state auspices of security is flexibility – both from the PSNI in terms of appreciating the sheer range of non-state provision as delivered on the ground (see *Appendix A*); and from community organisations in terms of what PSNI can practically deliver within the context of the sample areas. In view of the diverse, vibrant and organised community body contributing to policing across a range of social, physical and cultural contexts, not only does security governance provide a practical response to deficits in PSNI policing, but also provides a range of responses suited to local needs and contexts (CJINI, 2006a; Topping, 2008b). However, it is PSNI's inability, unwillingness and refusal to even attempt to engage with such organisations as a 'fourth service' in any *meaningful* way which has caused both resentment and isolation. So too from the community perspective, by virtue of their (relatively) bureaucracy free policing provision, they cannot compare the speed of their responses to those of the PSNI. Nor can the speed of PSNI response to incidents be continually compared (as is often the case) to 'swift' paramilitary justice, often invoked as a delegitimising and comparative 'fact' within harder-to-reach areas. But in terms of CGP and service delivery, there are a number of other emerging issues which suggest the need for PSNI and community organisations to recalibrate both their vision of, and attitudes towards, a more co-operative *policing* rather than 'us and them' *police* service.

It is widely recognised by community organisations, and as evidenced through the orientation of their workloads, that sensitivity to 'normal' crime and everyday quality of life issues has heightened. However, as perceived at the local level, community policing as delivered by PSNI is doing anything *other* than dealing with such problems as identified through community bodies. And such is the PSNI's adherence to, and self-legitimation of, their service through their own aggregated statistics that it has created new levels of discontentment with PSNI in the sample areas (Byrne, 2008; Topping, 2008b). On one hand, with PSNI's service having become so skewed from the reality of community needs within the sample areas,

community organisations delivering on the ‘gaps’ left by PSNI have resorted to advising members of the community not to report crimes which do not fall with local Policing Plan targets. Indeed, for many community respondents, PSNI’s delivery of *any* type of policing service has gone ‘backwards’. Though on the other hand, with neither PSNI dealing effectively with community problems, nor community-based provision able to cope in isolation, it has created a policing void – generating a renewed demand for (along with rises in) paramilitary policing and ‘punishment beatings’. With significant rises in paramilitary policing at the time of writing, it is indicative of communities, to coin one political respondent, crying out for proper policing of any kind.

But beyond the physical capacities, knowledge and willingness of communities to deliver a policing service within their local areas (itself a quality to be embraced), such a service also possesses intrinsic, transitional qualities for communities moving out of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Where properly supported, local policing and security providers can help communities break their cultural cycle of reliance upon (and subservience to) paramilitary factions as ‘viable’ policing options. And where embraced as part of the PSNI’s community policing service, latent non-state security provision can play an important mediating role between communities on the periphery of accepting and co-operating with PSNI; and as a stepping stone away from parallel policing provision to a combined CGP service. However, it is important to explore some of the policy directions which point towards CGP as a service combining all auspices and providers of state and non-state security into an effective ‘mass’.

### 6.6.2 Policy Directions

In terms of policy directions for the delivery of an overarching CGP service, a number of key issues must be addressed in regard to both moving towards and embracing the broader potential for a *policing* rather than just police service (Patten, 1999). A significant area of policy to be tackled is PSNI's commitment to community policing as part of working in conjunction with the community. Beyond their broad policy statement on Policing with the Community (PSNI, 2002a), it is evident their own officers are far from certain as to organisational imperatives around community policing. So too communities continue to be unsure as to what could or should be expected of PSNI as part of their community-oriented service. In regard to the broader delivery of community policing by PSNI, while the right organisational 'noises' are being made, beneath this customer-oriented 'veneer', there is little substance to the reality of effective engagement and service on the ground.

With PSNI at an organisational and policy level effectively riding two policing styles (response and community policing), they have projected conflicting messages to communities and community organisations within the sample areas as to what 'type' of policing service they are *attempting* to deliver. With PSNI oscillating between (predominantly) responding to targets and working with communities, there has been no stability to their service upon which the necessary relationships to delivery policing in conjunction with communities can be built (Pulhipongsiriporn and Quang, 2005). And with their service tipped firmly in favour of NIPB and DPP targets, this has further skewed the delivery of policing from the community reality of that required on a number of levels.

Firstly, with a lack of commitment by the PSNI, NIPB or DPPs as to an effective definition or understanding of community policing, service delivery is defined exclusively as a function of PSNI's statistical outputs – not in terms of the necessary relations, local satisfaction levels and physical engagement with communities and their organisations. In this regard, there has been a severance of PSNI's policing service from that which is required by the communities in which they work. With senior officers admitting that they are no longer in control of the

service they deliver by virtue of target culture, policy must be re-developed in favour of defining it through the quality of relations rather than the quantity of criminogenic ‘interactions’ – a premise which has little to do with the concept of community policing in the first instance (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005; Kiely and Peek, 2002; Jesilow and Parsons, 2000). Even when a proactive, community-oriented policing service was delivered to meet targets and reduce crime, senior officers perceived it to be a ‘zero-sum game’. With officers *losing* their local resources because they had reduced their levels of crime (and hence, crime to deal with), it raises fundamental questions as to PSNI policy around the organisational importance attached to the delivery of a community-oriented service.

But moving away from the limitations regarding PSNI policy *per se*, a re-assessment of non-state policing and security capacities must be considered in *relation* to that delivered by PSNI. With non-state provision of policing and security widely acknowledged at the NPT level to provide a *primary* response to a number of policing issues within the sample areas, it suggests the need for a re-calibration of the ‘place’ of both state and non-state policing services as part of CGP. At least within the NPTs, there is a distinct recognition that the socially embedded capacities of local policing provision are superior in regard to the identification of, and dealing with, local community issues. With officers further denoting both a ‘police line’ and a ‘community line’ to the delivery of local policing, it is the latter which was considered to be of most utility to the efficiency of resolving problems within the sample areas.

Significantly for policy directions around service delivery and CGP, PSNI’s service is often (directly and indirectly) dependent upon that delivered through local non-state provision. With such non-state provision widely recognised to contribute to social control within the sample areas, it further provides a ‘buffer’ for PSNI in regard to fluctuating crime levels. Indeed, local security governance may be viewed as ‘mopping up’ the anti-community issues not dealt with by PSNI, or that which was not part of their targets. As frequently articulated by both neighbourhood officers and community organisations, not only would PSNI’s job be significantly harder if were not for local non-state policing, but officers actually *expect* and take

for granted that community organisations provide their ‘policing’ service. From an objective viewpoint, the research would strongly suggest that a form of CGP service already exists within the sample areas – which in turn has normative implications for policy considerations in regard to PSNI acknowledging this *de facto* ‘state’ of CGP.

In terms of both community policing and the governance of security being considered under the CGP banner, space must also be afforded as to *how* these forms of policing may be drawn together into an overarching service. At least one starting point from which to consider such a policy direction is that of pragmatism. With the research (and literature) evidencing that the delivery of policing is not a managerial standard, by virtue of the multitude of non-state organisations who contribute to that service ‘picture’, PSNI can no longer claim that under their singular statistical/target regime, their service is in any way community-led (Brookes, 2006; Bayley, 1994). Furthermore, in view of PSNI’s ever diminishing resources in the post-conflict era, they cannot maintain the ‘illusion’ that they are the only viable auspice of policing by virtue of their ‘official’ status. Indeed, policy considerations for CGP must begin at the limitation of the PSNI’s service as a matter of practical necessity and not as a challenge to the sovereignty and place of state power (Stenson, 1993).

It is also critical that for CGP to succeed as a viable form of service delivery that understanding and compromise is reached on a number of levels between PSNI and non-state actors. Firstly, more efforts must be made within PSNI to formally recognise the range of non-security provision contributing to the broader policing of the sample areas. Beyond a general recognition in the literature as to the existence of local security governance activity (Kempa and Shearing, 2005; Topping, 2008b), the present study has provided the first empirical and systematic examination of those non-state policing contributions; how they are organised; and the underlying rationales for such provision within the sample areas. Though with much of this knowledge already located within PSNI at the NPT level, there is a renewed need for PSNI to relocate power and autonomy for delivering community policing down the ranks as a means of embedding that knowledge within ‘police work’.

Secondly, it is the nexus between community organisations and the social issues underpinning crime and anti-community behaviour which is crucial. With

community respondents indicating that the Troubles essentially camouflaged issues such as deprivation and disadvantage, it is community organisations, through their interventions, responses, education and mediation that are at the forefront of delivering the appropriate social responses to those issues. Thus, as a ‘tool’ through which PSNI can ‘see’ beyond crimes *per se* in the delivery of their service, CGP is about shifting policy (and the police gaze) from *post hoc* responses and towards proactive solutions and interventions regarding crime and anti-community behaviours.

Thirdly, as an indicator of the success of non-state security governance services, many of the community organisations providing that service had built up significant user group reliance within the sample areas. In part, this was simply a product of the politics of the conflict as a progenitor for parallel policing provision. Though in part, it is the *continuing* reliance upon local security provision by community members which is of interest for policy. On one level, this may be viewed as a measure of the ongoing police legitimacy issues within the (mostly Republican) sample areas. But on another level, the success of non-state policing provision may be viewed in terms of its effectiveness in dealing with issues on the ground which matches that demanded by the local communities.

In terms of policy direction, mutual co-operation between PSNI and community organisations is therefore not a simple ‘choice’ which parties can ‘take’ or ‘leave’. Rather, PSNI must be aware of the ‘place’ of their own service delivery within the reality and effectiveness of non-state provision within East and West Belfast (Kempa and Shearing, 2005). Though from an objective viewpoint, community-based security provision must seek to move beyond their entrenched rationales that can perpetuate the ‘separateness’ from PSNI’s attempts at community policing. Indeed, for CGP to become a viable policy option, community organisations cannot expect PSNI to engage with local security governance provision where it continues to be an extension of communal division between Loyalist and Republican communities (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). Thus, CGP policy must strike a balance between helping non-state security provision move away from any of their negative power models; while limiting the conditions for police and community



co-operation which may harbour or justify the parallel nature to state and non-state delivery of policing services.

Finally, the potential delivery of a CGP service between PSNI and community auspices is governed by a complex and complicating array of physical, cultural and relational factors. Importantly for CGP, the current research has demonstrated the viable and legitimate provision of non-state policing within the sample areas. But critically, it has evidenced beyond the available literature or research, the organisation and rationales underpinning the work of non-state auspices of policing and security. With the fieldwork further dispelling the generic ‘myths’ of paramilitarism as the popular and primary source of non-state social control within East and West Belfast, it has also explored the delivery of non-state security governing in *conjunction* with, and at the *interface* to, community policing as delivered by PSNI (Brogden, 1998; Knox, 2002; Monaghan, 2008). In this regard, questions around the ‘fascinating experiment’ for ‘civic involvement’ in policing, so bluntly disregarded over the years, has been re-invigorated (Gormally, 2004; McEvoy *et al.*, 2002).

For CGP to become a successful policy option, PSNI must be prepared to properly invest in community policing as the core to their entire service (and not a peripheral function); and accept their place as one of many auspices of policing as part of the reality to the post-conflict landscape. In regard to the current post-Patten ‘drift’ in relation to community policing, it has separated PSNI in a fundamental way from the communities in which they work. And while the new political dispensation may have dealt with the *politics* of PSNI and communities working together, it has yet to provide the answers to the *practical* inclusion of communities (and their capacities) in Policing with the Community policy as part of Patten’s original vision of reform.

As argued by Sir Maurice Hayes in the post-Patten aftermath, community policing, as the core to the Patten reforms is something of a ‘holy grail’ – not just for PSNI, but for police services around the world in terms of the myriad interpretations and understandings of the concept (CAJ, 1999). But as the research has evidenced, with little room afforded to communities or their capacities to govern their own

security, the use of the term ‘community’ in PSNI’s service delivery policy is highly questionable. It is therefore to the current research and the concept of CGP to which policy must turn. Providing a framework for both understanding and including communities, and their capacities in broader *policing* ‘thinking’, this study goes at least some way to a more definitive vision of our ‘holy grail’ policing pursuit, at least within the context of Northern Ireland. And importantly, within the late modern reality of the policing and security landscape (Garland, 2001), CGP as a means of thinking about ‘policing more broadly conceived’ provides a vital link to the original conception of policing as embodied under the thinking of Sir Robert Peel in 1829 – namely, a simple vision of the police as the public, and the public as the police (Kelling, 2005; Kempa and Shearing, 2005).

## **6.7 Answering the Research Questions**

### **6.7.1 Introduction**

After posing the original research questions at the start of the thesis, the current study has journeyed through a vast array of literature, methodological considerations and analysis over the course of nearly three years. Having produced and interpreted a unique set of data in regard to the research conducted with PSNI and community organisations, it is only at this point which the research questions may be answered. The following section will answer each of those questions as a means of providing a definitive overview to the research, while considering the governance of security in Policing with the Community.

### **6.7.2 Has Policing with the Community as the Core to Police Reforms Been Realised Within PSNI?**

In terms Policing with the Community becoming the core to PSNI's style of policing, its implementation has suffered from many social, political and organisational impediments. As evident from the research, the practical delivery of Policing with the Community has been further complicated due to the challenges posed by Northern Ireland's transitional character. As a consequence, while the PSNI have been radically reformed in line with Patten's first 'stream' (Kempa and Shearing, 2005), the changes to policing on the ground have largely been negligible. At least within the sample areas of the research, policing still largely mirrors the reactive style of policing characteristic of the Troubles, albeit in a relative peace-time context.

On a number of levels, the findings would indicate that institutional inertia within PSNI has served to limit each of the elements of Policing with the Community and thus, the translation of Patten's core recommendation into action on the ground. At an organisational level, there has been a complete failure of direction, leadership, resources and managerial dedication to the delivery of a community-oriented policing service. Any progress in the development in police-community interaction can only be attributed to the politics of police reform, not because of any new or innovative community policing practice on the ground.

Furthermore, as evident from the research, operational divides between the various PSNI departments have reduced the Policing with the Community concept and philosophy to mere aspiration – of which everyone is aware, but to which no one subscribes or understands. With managerial levels trumpeting to the world that PSNI is a community-oriented service, beneath the veneer of policy rhetoric this research has shown that Policing with the Community has become a hollow and empty project in comparison with Patten's original vision.

At an operational level, Policing with the Community has been reduced to a peripheral task, as an exception rather than the rule to policing within the sample areas. Indeed, it is clear that PSNI's operational 'emphasis' on community policing appears to be less of an organisational mindset embraced throughout the whole service, and more of an abrogation of frontline policing duties left in the hands of a few 'specialist' officers. This has been further compounded by the fact that PSNI are solely concerned 'what' can be measured and recorded as part of their policing service – a premise which has little to do with community policing in the first place. With a dominant and pervasive 'target culture' influencing all aspects of PSNI's service, policing as delivered on the ground has become divorced from the reality of that which is required by local communities. In this regard, it is those who advocate a managerialist, performance-oriented approach to police work within PSNI (and the NIPB) who have reduced policing to anything *other* than a community-centred service.

As a consequence of Policing with the Community being adopted as a superficial, not substantive PSNI policy, there has been a critical failure in the delivery of this key Patten recommendation within PSNI and at the community level. With little consent or connection between the police and the policed, there has been and continues to be, a distinct apathy within PSNI to provide the 'tools' to either officers or members of the community to work together; to work with the grain of established community structures; or integrate the community to any meaningful extent into community policing policy or practice.

Ultimately, successful claims at Policing with the Community cannot yet be made by PSNI. This is especially so when policing is becoming increasingly disconnected from the Loyalist communities in which it traditionally has had strongest support; and when it is failing to deliver any discernable improvement on the ground within newly supportive Republican communities. With the research indicating that *neither* community is satisfied with the policing service they are receiving, the PSNI must, as a matter of urgency, re-consider what is required to realise Policing with the Community as the core to their service and become part of the community in which they police.

### **6.7.3 What is the Role of Community-based Security Governance and what Capacities does it Possess?**

As evident from the research, community-based security governance is a general term used to describe the myriad contributions made by non-state actors to broad policing, security and crime issues within the sample areas. In this regard, it occupies a significant role in the promotion of communal, social and practical capacities which contribute in some way, to reducing or preventing crime and anti-community behaviours.

A crucial role of community-based security governance are the context-specific responses and solutions to local policing and security issues. With the groups and bodies which comprise such activity providing a working definition to community problems, they define crimes and anti-community behaviours not as a phenomenon in itself, but as multi-faceted issues grounded in the social fabric of the locale. It is this which sets the context for policing within the sample areas. Furthermore, because security governance allows for the broader circumstances of crime and policing to be considered at the community level, it simultaneously looks beyond narrow police definitions of crime and provides a range of potential solutions in the interest of a wider community good. Indeed, legitimacy and consent for security governing through local participation acts as a medium for the deepening of democracy around policing issues.

In terms of the role of local security governance in dealing with crime and policing issues, a crucial feature is the co-ordination of responses across a range of social, political and cultural contexts. Through de-centring the focus of action from a singular police-centric response to a process of ontological understanding, security governance tailors appropriate interventions from a range of bodies. In this regard, accountability for action is judged upon actors fulfilling obligations in relation to their responsibilities – not merely in terms of measurable ‘products’ or in reference to legitimacy compared with state responses. It is from this

perspective that security governance, as demonstrated through the research, possesses a community value beyond the sum of police-centric calculations; and considers alternatives as to the necessary 'place' of state and non-state actors in dealing with policing issues in the community.

Looking at the capacity of community-based security governance, it is clear that the associational networks within and between communities have the power to co-ordinate activities and resources in a fluid, iterative manner. With community bodies constantly attuned to, and guided by democratic local self-direction, security governance provides a reflexive and flexible approach to anti-community behaviour in comparison with that of the police. Thus, when combined with the strategic planning and awareness to community-based activity, security governance supplies an effective alternative to state policing responses which: contributes to the reduction of crime and anti-community behaviour; empowers a variety of actors to work together on mutually exclusive issues; and compliments policing as delivered by the PSNI.

Finally, in relation to transitional character of Northern Ireland, security governance possesses an intrinsic mediating capacity. With politics and legitimacy issues still influencing attitudes to crime and policing, community-based activity provides an important 'stepping-stone' for communities to move away from paramilitarism and parallel policing influences; and towards the necessary inclusion of the state police into local policing matters. Furthermore, the governance of security provides an important focus for community structures in terms of enhancing the characteristics of collective organising necessary to arrest crime and insecurity. Thus, community-based security governance acts not only an *additional* and *complimentary* policing activity to that provided by the state, but a means of managing various community-centred roles and capacities as part of social and cultural policing resource that works towards creating safer neighbourhoods.

#### **6.7.4 What is the Potential for Policing with the Community and the Governance of Security to be Incorporated into an Overarching Community Governance Policing Framework?**

On a superficial level, the research would suggest that the potential for community governance policing (CGP) rests upon the mutual re-adjustment of roles, rationales and capacities between the PSNI and community auspices of security governance. Indeed, reaching a common consensus around policing and security issues may be the logical extension to police and community ‘thinking’ as part of policing more broadly conceived. However, there are a number of issues around the potential of any such interaction and the realisation of a CGP approach to policing and security issues.

As part of accounting for the delivery of policing activities, CGP is premised upon the notion of *relationships* between, and *inclusion* of, all viable auspices and providers of security. CGP is therefore about moving beyond narrow state-centric definitions of policing and security and towards broader process-based conceptions – or that which defines policing not as a ‘box-tick’ or target exercise, but as the combination of contributions from those with a responsibility in policing matters. In this sense, a greater certainty to the ‘place’ of state and non-state auspices must be imagined, accounting for activity according to the relative responsibility (and not the notional outcomes) of actors at the community level.

In terms of creating synergy, CGP will also require a significant amount of re-evaluation between PSNI and community auspices of policing in terms of how they ‘see’ each other. Only through conceptually divorcing themselves from the centre of their own worlds can PSNI and non-state actors appreciate the potential for their policing activities to contribute to a wider public ‘good’. Indeed, CGP is about utilising the best available resources appropriate to local circumstance and context. In this regard, there is a need for PSNI to supply more resources to communities, along with autonomy for officers to dispense those resources as part



of working with the grain of the community. Only then may CGP begin to take hold at the local level. Similarly, the research has evidenced a greater need for non-state actors to make their 'soft power' more amenable to PSNI as part of developing synergy to working practices around policing and security issues.

As part of dealing with problems at the community level, there is potential for CGP where community auspices (at the centre of problems) are given the space to identify and manage problems on their terms. On the one hand, PSNI need to move away from reliance upon the a-social, technical and procedural 'narrowness' to their problem solving processes. On the other hand, PSNI need to realise that they only supply the 'tools' to deal with the symptoms of complex community problems of which they are but one potential solution. It is only from this perspective that there may be a greater appreciation of the community auspices who supply the focus for, and context to, the causes of those problems. CGP must therefore be conceived in terms of PSNI supporting the community structures and organising which contribute to local problem solving capacities; and considering new ways in which to re-distribute responsibility and resources to those community auspices who are better placed to take ownership and supply the appropriate local solutions. And in simple terms, CGP is about a more fluid interaction between community policing and security governing which moves beyond policing as a police responsibility and towards collective community responses in the interest *of* the community.

In order to effect the necessary relationships between PSNI and non-state auspices, there is a demonstrable need for partnerships to be governed by relationships rather than rules. Due to PSNI's hierarchical nature, CGP will require a fundamental shift to the interface of the police with community structures, as gateways into the cultural and social density of the sample areas. As the research has evidenced, where all state and non-state auspices of security can work in effective partnership arrangements, there is potential to provide a policing resource which is greater than the sum of contributions from individual partners. CGP is also about moving away from considering partnerships as static entities between PSNI and the community, and towards thinking of them as shifting

alliances which need to involve key community actors and groups with a relevant stake in local issues – as those who further add legitimacy and direction to community links with the PSNI.

Finally, CGP is about working towards an alignment of PSNI and community visions of what a policing service should ‘look like’. In part, PSNI must put more organisational effort into the delivery of Policing with the Community as part of working *with* the community; and in part, view their policing service on terms other than their own. In this regard, an understanding of the *de facto* non-state policing service provided through security governing may be considered, allowing steps to be taken to acknowledge community-based security governing on a more formal basis; while incorporating such activity into state policing agendas as an *additional* rather than *competing* auspice of security. Where there is recognition of non-state policing by PSNI, then at least the foundations for its regulation in line with broader state policies may laid. Thus, a safer ‘space’ may be created in which to appreciate that which bolsters the deficits in PSNI’s policing service *and* in many cases, provides a primary policing response at the community level.

In overview of the potential for CGP, it is only by altering the frame of reference for ‘thinking’ in regard to policing that the nexus between PSNI (through Policing with the Community) and community-based security governance may be enhanced. At least in Northern Ireland with the advent of Community Safety Partnerships, there is some structural basis for the inclusion of a range of non-state bodies involved in policing issues. Although the current ‘level’ at which they operate (in terms of working above the level of grass-roots community bodies) is a question is to be answered in another study. Through imaging policing and security as part of a wider system to the management of crime and anti-community behaviours, it is possible to dispense with assumption that the state has (right to the) monopoly over policing matters. From this perspective, the potential for CGP is to move beyond narrow state-centric views of policing; consider a viable ‘place’ for community-based provision of security; and alongside the necessary ‘place’ of the state, embrace the contestations,

resistances and social antagonisms which have shaped the rule of law and policing in Northern Ireland through the systematic provision of alternatives.

## 6.8 Contribution to Knowledge

In terms of this thesis, it has contributed to the body of knowledge on community policing and the governance of security on three key grounds. Firstly, it has provided one of the first empirical examinations of Patten's central recommendation on Policing with the Community as internalised within PSNI and delivered on the ground. Taking the well-rehearsed field community policing, the research has provided a detailed analysis of how the concept and philosophy has been understood, interpreted and delivered by PSNI. Furthermore, the research provides a unique perspective for community policing theory in terms of how it has been managed within a reformed (and reforming) police organisation; and the issue of its delivery within a divided society still in transition, as it emerges from a protracted, internal armed conflict.

Secondly, the research has provided the first systematic, empirical examination of non-state policing in Northern Ireland. Through the concept of the governance of security, the thesis has evidenced the highly organised and co-ordinated body of community-based providers of policing and security. Indeed, beyond the established literature on paramilitary 'policing', virtually no attention has been paid the variety of alternative, peaceful and democratic activities of non-state actors which contribute to the broader delivery of policing in the country. The research has also identified, outside debates as to the legitimacy or 'place' of such activity, the *modus operandi* and context to this policing and security 'otherness'. In this regard, the thesis has widened the knowledge (and the debate) as to the roles and capacities of community-based security provision and their necessary position in relation to that of PSNI.

Finally, the thesis has not only deepened and extended the body of knowledge on community policing and the governance of security, but combined these theoretical approaches into a new concept – that of community governance policing (CGP). Taking the findings from both community policing and the governance of security, CGP provides a systematic means of how to better

understand and enhance the interface between PSNI and community-based providers of policing and security. Through the CGP concept, it is possible to draw the mutually exclusive fields of community policing and security governance together - as a means of considering policing and security as part of a wider public 'good' in the community. In this regard, the thesis has redrawn the parameters to the policing debate in Northern Ireland by providing a robust and coherent approach to the aspiration of a former Patten Commissioner – simply that of policing more *broadly* conceived (Kempa and Shearing, 2005).

## 7.0 Appendices: A - D

### *Appendix A*

#### **Governing Security within East and West Belfast: Activities, Issues, Actions and Outcomes**

##### **East Belfast:**

<b>Area of Work</b>	<b>Issues Addressed</b>	<b>Actions Taken</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Advocacy</b>	Parading	Liaising with PSNI, community groups and local residents both pre and post-parade on routes and conditions	Diffuse tensions, negotiate affirmative action between parade organisers and communities to prevent violence, compromise on contentious routes and prevent/minimise 'flashpoints'
	Interface Violence	Liaise across interfaces between groups and communities including statutory bodies.	Minimise conditions under which interface violence can occur, plan for contentious periods and create action plans for responses
	Operational Policing	Articulate community views on single issues and as part of wider police accountability	Negotiate PSNI responses tailored to local community needs and reflect/assess effectiveness of action
	Vulnerable Groups	Provide a voice for vulnerable and marginal groups in communities on quality of life/criminal issues	Highlight 'hidden' crime and increase level of input from all sections of communities on crime

		such as elderly, young, disabled	and policing issues
	Other Groups	Formation of independent advisory groups on policing and single issues of community concern	Provide a direct link between specific sections or groups within communities and PSNI on ad hoc or regular basis
<b>Education/ Intervention</b>	Community Training	Provide training for interested community groups on delivering services, consultations, community audits and lobbying	Improve community capacities to promote local issues and open links to Government and politicians on crime and anti-community behaviours
	Community Education	Provide a range of forums, advice and educational tools to prevent and respond to community issues and anti-community behaviours	Educate on range of issues: drugs, alcohol, bonfire safety, anti-social behaviour, environment issues, avenues for redress and to deal with above
	Identifying 'At Risk' Groups	Identifying groups at risk of offending within communities	Provide links between 'at risk' groups, Probation and youth organisations, delivering support and diversion strategies
	Policing and Crime	Educate communities on PSNI, policing structures and crime prevention initiatives, often in conjunction with PSNI	Break down barriers, misconceptions and attitudes to policing through education while helping prevent crime in the community
<b>Emergency Response</b>	Interface Violence	Provide immediate responses and deploy community members to deal with interface violence	Quell interface violence, identify perpetrators and prevent further attacks or reprisals
	General Criminality	Deploy community members to local anti-community behaviour	Provide visible community presence, identify offenders and

		incidents and hotspots and contact PSNI	hasten police response times through contacts with local officers
<b>Partnerships</b>	Working with PSNI	Collaborate with PSNI on range of crime issues, plan joint police/community operations	Develop local working relationships with officers and identify local roles and responsibilities between police and community on crime issues
	Developing Partnerships	Provide links between 'hard to reach' sections of communities and groups	Building the community 'reach' of PSNI, developing trust and new working practices
	Accountability	Use local contacts with PSNI and statutory agencies to streamline communications on local issues	Reduce response times and get quick answers to local police and statutory responses in the community
	Single Issues	Creating links with PSNI and statutory agencies on single issues of concern to communities	Provide tailored, preventative approaches and responses to local problems facing communities with relevant agencies
	Multi-Agency Working	Creating proactive links with a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies to address local crime and anti-community behaviour with multiple causes	Utilise the capacities of a variety of differing agencies and ensuring agencies take responsibility for their area of working in the community
<b>Prevention</b>	Environmental and Economic Regeneration	Identifying, developing and responding to economic and	Provide facilities, facilitating voluntary activity and reversing



		community development issues to improve quality of life	the symptoms of 'broken windows' and community degradation
	Fear of Crime	Identifying and responding to a range of issues which promote fear of crime; conducting local community audits and crime surveys and targeting causes of fear	Reducing fear of crime through targeting and educating vulnerable groups; holding community safety information days; providing 'Good Morning' projects
<b>Mediation</b>	Public Order Situations	Devising both short and long term strategies between PSNI, communities and paramilitaries to minimise public disorder	Reduce actual and potential public orders situations and improve long term community relations on contentious issues such as parades, bonfires, interfaces
	Police Operations	Provide reassurance to communities during local police operations such as drug searches and house searches	Dispel myths or misconceptions of PSNI work and articulate need for and benefits of their operations
	Neutrality	Provide neutral venues and facilities for contentious issues and/or cross community dialogue	Facilitate and promote working between rival or opposing communities groups/bodies to resolve issues and promote relations
	Cross-Community Working	Bring together a range of cross-community groups on a range of productive, practical and leisure issues	Facilitate and promote engagement between Loyalist and Republican communities, from youth football to community safety and break down barriers

<b>Restorative Justice</b>	Restorative Practices	Dedicated NIO accredited restorative justice agency to provide local solutions to local criminality and anti-community behaviour while providing links to a variety of community and paramilitary members	Divert people from the formal criminal justice system and paramilitary punishment, integrate them back into the community and reduce pressures on PSNI resources; provide paramilitary threat verifications

## West Belfast

Area of Work	Issues Addressed	Actions Taken	Outcomes
Advocacy	Operational Policing	Providing a point of contact with senior officers on operational issues and act as a voice for community concerns to PSNI	Articulate views of the community and community groups on local crime and anti-community behaviours and question rationale and operational decision
	Parading	Liaising with PSNI, community groups and local residents both pre and post-parade on routes and conditions	Diffuse tensions, negotiate affirmative action between parade organisers and communities to prevent violence, compromise on contentious routes and prevent/minimise 'flashpoints'
	Interface Violence	Liaise across interfaces between groups and communities including statutory bodies.	Minimise conditions under which interface violence can occur, plan for contentious periods and create action plans for responses
	Quality of Life Issues	Co-ordinate political parties, community groups and statutory agencies around a variety of crime issues	Lobbying PSNI, Belfast City Council and other service providers on social issues and environmental conditions
	Vulnerable and Excluded Groups	Provide a voice for vulnerable and marginal groups in communities on quality of life/criminal issues such as elderly, young, disabled and those previously alienated from state	Highlight 'hidden' crime and increase level of input from all sections of communities on crime and policing issues

		criminal justice system	
<b>Education/ Intervention</b>	Community Training	Provide training for interested community groups on delivering services, consultations, community audits and lobbying	Improve community capacities to promote local issues and open links to Government and politicians on crime and anti-community behaviours
	Community Education	Provide a range of forums, advice and educational tools to prevent and respond to community issues	Educate on range of issues: drugs, alcohol, bonfire safety, anti-social behaviour, environment issues, avenues for redress and to deal with above; promoting parental responsibility for anti-community behaviour
	Identifying 'At Risk' Groups	Identifying groups at risk of offending within communities	Provide links between 'at risk' groups, Probation and youth organisations, delivering support and diversion strategies; working in schools on drug issues
	Policing and Crime	Educate communities on PSNI, policing structures and crime prevention initiatives, often in conjunction with PSNI	Break down barriers, misconceptions and attitudes to policing through education while helping prevent crime in the community; develop codes of conduct for alcohol sales with licensed trade; education and diversion from 'joyriding';
<b>Emergency Response</b>	Interface Violence and Parades	Provide immediate responses and deploy community members to deal with interface	Quell interface violence, identify perpetrators and prevent further attacks or

		violence	reprisals; 'mobile phone network'; marshalling parades
	General Criminality	Deploy community members to local anti-community behaviour incidents and hotspots and contact PSNI	Provide visible community presence, identify offenders and hasten police response times through contacts with local officers; conducting investigations within the community; monitoring 'live' criminality and anti-social behaviour to record perpetrators and PSNI responses
<b>Partnerships</b>	Working with PSNI	Collaborate with PSNI on range of crime issues, plan joint police/community operations	Develop local working relationships with officers and identify local roles and responsibilities between police and community on crime issues; advertising campaigns in conjunction with PSNI
	Developing Partnerships	Provide links between 'hard to reach' sections of communities and groups	Building the community 'reach' of PSNI, developing trust and new working practices
	Accountability	Use local contacts with PSNI and statutory agencies to streamline communications	Reduce response times and get quick answers to local police and statutory responses in the community
	Single Issues	Creating links with PSNI and statutory agencies on single issues of concern to communities	Provide tailored, preventative approaches and responses to local problems facing communities with relevant agencies

	Multi-Agency Working	Creating proactive links with a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies to address local crime and anti-community behaviour with multiple causes	Utilise the capacities of a variety of differing agencies and ensuring agencies take responsibility for their area of working in the community and prioritise community need.
	Intra-Community	Strategic co-ordination of local organisations on crime issues	Maximise community capacities, resources and provide a cohesive responses to crime involving the community
<b>Prevention</b>	Environmental and Economic Regeneration	Identifying, developing and responding to economic and community development issues to improve quality of life issues	Provide facilities, facilitating voluntary activity and reversing the symptoms of 'broken windows', community degradation and 'signal crimes'
	Fear of Crime	Identifying and responding to a range of issues which promote fear of crime; conducting local community audits and crime surveys and targeting causes of fear	Reducing fear of crime through targeting and educating vulnerable groups; holding community safety information days; providing 'Good Morning' projects
<b>Mediation</b>	Public Order Situations	Devising both short and long term strategies between PSNI, communities and paramilitaries to minimise public disorder	Reduce actual and potential public orders situations and improve long term community relations on contentious issues such as parades, bonfires, interfaces; identify potential flashpoints and confrontations and

			forewarn PSNI
	Neutrality	Provide neutral venues and facilities for contentious issues and/or cross community dialogue	Facilitate and promote working between rival or opposing communities groups/bodies to resolve issues and promote relations
	Cross-Community Working	Bring together a range of cross-community groups on a range of productive, practical and leisure issues	Facilitate and promote engagement between Loyalist and Republican communities, from youth football to community safety and break down barriers
<b>Restorative Justice</b>	Restorative Practices	Dedicated NIO accredited restorative justice agency to provide local solutions to local criminality and anti-community behaviour while providing links to a variety of community and paramilitary members	Divert people from the formal criminal justice system and paramilitary punishment, integrate them back into the community and reduce pressures on PSNI resources; provide paramilitary threat verifications; enforcing and regulating local anti-community behaviour initiatives; referral to PSNI for breach of bail conditions and ASBOS

## *Appendix B*



**POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND  
FOUNDATION PROGRAMMES  
GARNERVILLE PSNI COLLEGE,  
77 GARNERVILLE ROAD BELFAST BT4 2NX**

**TELEPHONE: 028 90922617 FAX: 028 90900204**

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**John R Topping Bsc  
Doctoral Researcher  
School of Policy Studies  
University of Ulster  
Jordanstown  
Newtownabbey  
County Antrim BT37 0QB**

**Your Ref.:**

**Our Ref FP/07**

**Date: 22 May 2007**

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**Dear John**

**RE: Proposed Research to be undertaken on the PSNI**

**I refer to your recent proposal on Research into the PSNI and also our discussion in relation to the matter.**

**I regret to inform you that at this time your current proposal would not be acceptable at this time.**

**Generally the proposal was thought to be too wide ranging in that it appears to be four different areas of research, albeit it tenuously linked.**

**The PSNI considers currently up to 5 research proposals a month and we would be happy to consider a more condensed proposal from yourself.**

**Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss the matter further.**

**Yours Sincerely**

**C.M. Kernohan  
C/Inspector  
Head Foundation Programmes  
Police College Northern Ireland  
00442890922217  
[mark.kernohan@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:mark.kernohan@psni.pnn.police.uk)**



## Appendix C



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

29<sup>th</sup> September 2008

**(Policing With the Community/Patten Report Recommendation No 148 )**

Dear John

I am forwarding this letter by way of a formal thank you for the excellent work you have done in relation to researching material on the topic of police engagement with 'Hard to Reach Groups', (Policing With the Community/Patten Recommendation 148).

In particular I was impressed by the originality and uniqueness of your product and the fresh light that you have thrown on such an important subject area. Your material has provided a solid foundation for our Police Trainers to work from in relation to the ongoing design of a Neighbourhood Policing Module and has created an opportunity for us within training to continue progress on a policing model fit to serve all of the community that is Northern Ireland.

I was particularly impressed by your methodology and the high levels of engagement that you undertook with all the departments and other stakeholders who participated in your research. This coupled with your own blend of professionalism and approachability has led to the undoubted success to date and I wish you well with the remainder of your PhD programme.

Yours sincerely

**Ken Annett**  
Acting Chief Inspector  
Head of Leadership and Development Training  
Northern Ireland Police College  
77-79 Garnerville Road  
BELFAST  
Northern Ireland BT4 2NX



*Calls within Police Service of Northern Ireland telephone system may be monitored or recorded*

## *Appendix D*

# **Police Service of Northern Ireland: Officer Interview Guide**

**Interviewer:**

**John R. Topping,  
Social and Policy Research Institute,  
University of Ulster**

**Contact Details:**

Room 21C13  
Social and Policy Research Institute,  
Research Graduate School,  
University of Ulster,  
Jordanstown,  
Shore Road,  
Newtownabbey,  
BT 37 0QB

**Telephone:**

02890 368653

**Email:**

[Topping-j3@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:Topping-j3@ulster.ac.uk)

**Research Summary:**

To examine the practical issues and realities of ‘Policing with the Community’ in local district command areas, including relational aspects of working with communities and community groups.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:**

**All views, opinions and references are ENTIRELY CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS.** All interview transcripts are screened and purged of any and all material

which has the potential to identify respondents in any way. All information is held in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Interview Format:**

Semi-structured interview

**Interview Length:**

Approximately one hour

**Recording Format:**

Digital voice recorder

(allows for secure digital storage of interview data and transcript)

**Post-Interview Analysis:**

Transcription of interview recording – to be analysed using NVIVO 7 qualitative data analysis software. A copy will be available for participant upon request

**Confidentiality/Anonymity:**

- All personal data relating to subjects will be anonymous in order to safeguard confidentiality;
- All such data will be kept in accordance with the University of Ulster's '**Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research**' and stored securely, with any coding information stored separately;
- Access to personal data stored electronically will be restricted to the researcher with secured access;
- The research will be compliant with obligations under the **Data Protection Act 1998**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Data Protection Act 1998 defines 'personal data' as data which relate to a living individual who can be identified:

- a) from that data, or
- b) from that data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into possession of the data controller

and includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indications of the intentions of the data controller or any other person in respect of the individual

# Interview Guide

## 1) General Issues Related to Policing in Local District:

- General issues related to policing
- How has community policing developed since the Patten Report?
- Community policing within the local community: factors which promote and inhibit working?

## 2) Accountability:

- General issues of accountability within the local community
- Accountability mechanisms within the community
- Accountability at the individual officer level
- Effect of community policing within ranks:
  - More or less working autonomy, room for innovation and working?
  - Willingness to take 'risks' associated with holistic approach of community policing?
- 'Measurement' of community policing:
  - Balance of formally expected activities with community policing related activity
  - Accountability for 'something that never was'
  - What measures would you like to see for community policing?
- Community perspectives on what is expected of you and what is actually possible / more community 'education' required?
- What would improve accountability at the local level?
  - Tapping into community organising?

## 3) Empowerment:

- Level of autonomy for officers to determine their own objectives in locale?
- Empowerment of the local community to work with police in local problems?
- What is the level of congruence between police and community to working?
- Is there any viable community to empower?
- How would you describe / do you recognise the community the community groups in which you police?
- What is the level of police dependence on the community and vice-versa?
- What are the limits of community involvement in crime issues?

**4) Problems Solving:**

- General issues of going about problem solving in the locale
- To what extent do you work with the grain of the community?
  - Perception of that working – interaction, token, unilateral?
  - Key actors or groups consulted with?
- Police ‘role’ in problem solving – the level of centrality in the process?
  - Framing of problems through police or community lens?
- What models, methods or processes are you involved in/aware of?
  - Perceptions of developments in problems solving – NIM, signal crimes, neighbourhood policing model?
- Issues related to the prioritisation of problems:
  - Target culture / hierarchical pressures
- Do you think it would be more effective to undertake problem solving in partnership with local community groups?

**5) Partnership:**

- How would you describe general partnerships between the police and the local community?
  - Relationship between legitimacy issues and partnership?
  - Level of work with local community groups?
- Are there any circumstances which promote or inhibit partnerships?
  - Are partnerships in the community out of necessity or desirability to work with the police?
- Do existing partnerships adequately represent the community
  - Who are those partnerships with?
  - Do you feel local policing embraces the latent qualities and capacities of community groups in partnerships?
- Do you feel there is a need to know more about the local community to develop partnerships?
- What are your perceptions or understandings of groups in the community who wish to work outside of police partnership in relation to crime issues?
- What could be done to further facilitate partnerships with local community groups?

**6) Service Delivery**

- What are your views/experiences of delivering policing as a ‘service’?
  - Do you feel you are delivering a service?
  - Attitudes to policing as a ‘service’
  - Do the public view you as a service?
- What is the balance of the ‘core’ police role as crime fighters and the service delivery approach?
- Do you feel that crime statistics and policing plans adequately reflect community policing?
- How does the pressure of targets/policing plans affect the delivery of policing in your area? Do they represent the expected delivery to the community?
- Would service delivery be improved through increased working with community groups as ‘focus points’ for community issues?
- What is the reality of service delivery within community policing?

**7) District Policing Partnerships:**

- Attitudes / opinions / experiences of DPPs – their effectiveness and practical utility for community policing in the locale?

**8) Training Issues and Community Policing:**

- What would you like to see included in training to improve the overall delivery of community policing?
- What are your opinions on ‘models’ of community policing or do you have other preferences?
- Awareness/appreciation of the voluntary and community sector input in to crime and social control issues?

**9) Summation of Community Policing in local area:**

- Is Patten’s vision of community policing working, and could it work better if underpinned by the strong community organising in the area?

## 8.0 References

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